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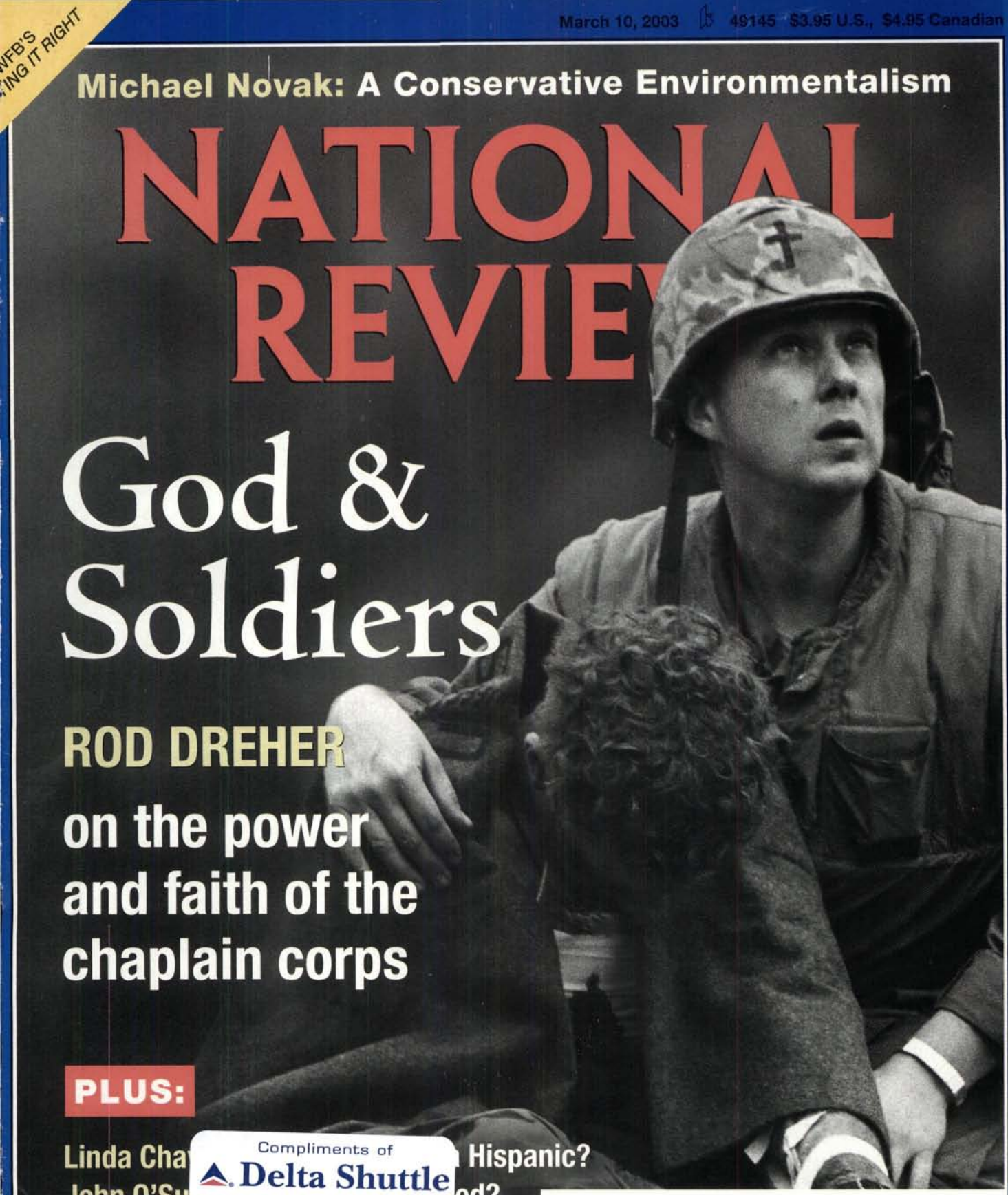
# NATIONAL REVIEW



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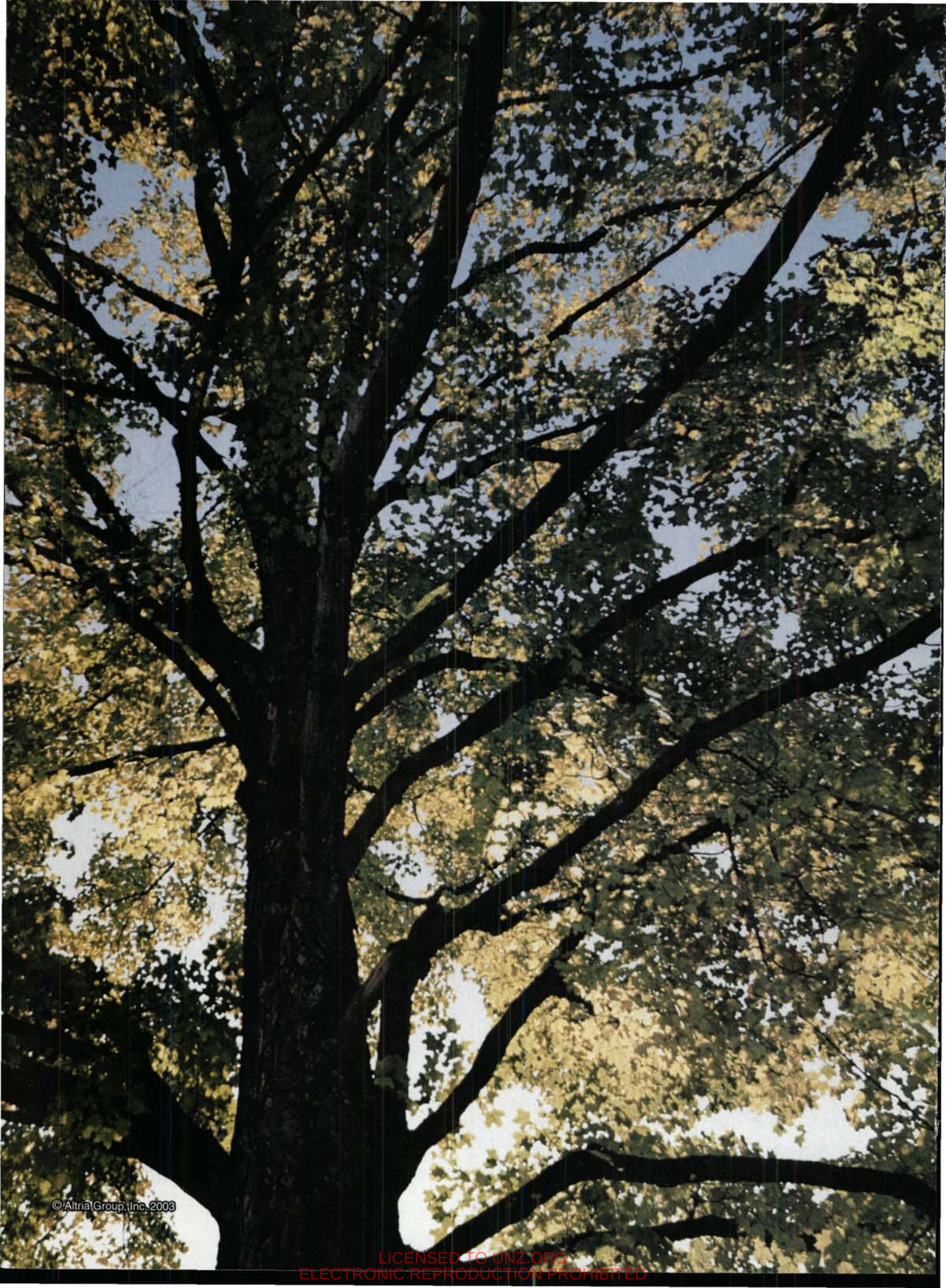


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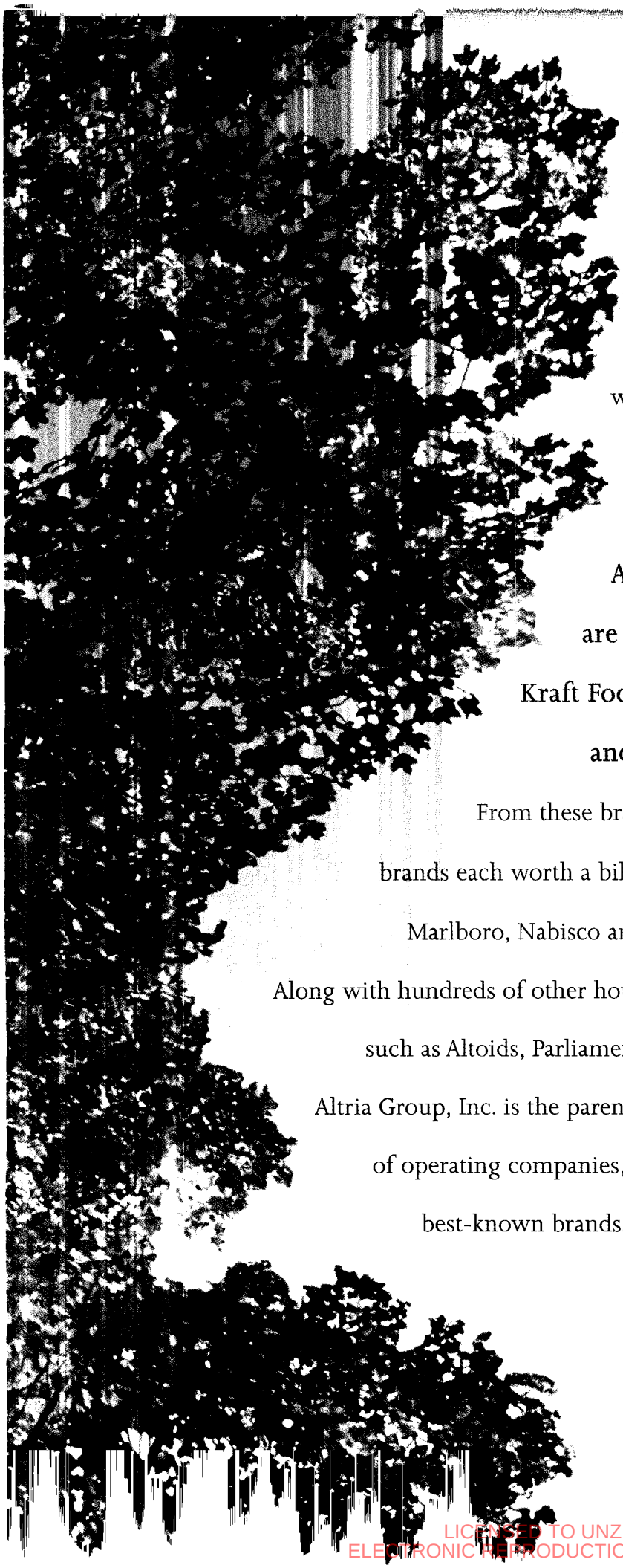

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■ COVER STORY

## Ministers of War

The nearly 1,400 chaplains in the U.S. armed forces must be on-the-spot counselors to men and women living through a kind of trauma that few civilians will ever experience. They prepare soldiers to kill and to die without losing their souls. And on the battlefield they serve as a sign of the presence of the just and good God in the midst of hell on earth. *By Rod Dreher*

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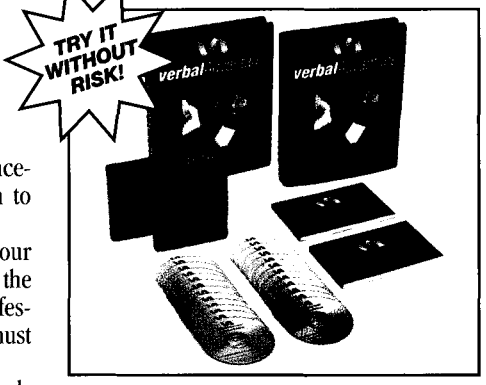


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March 10 issue; printed February 20



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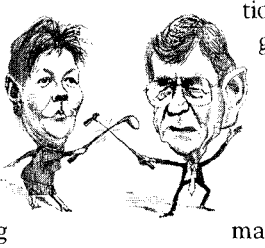
# letters to the editor

### HELP WANTED: MALE

Re Jay Nordlinger's "Hootie vs. Hootie" (Jan. 27): I would dearly love to see a wealthy conservative man with a little time and huge you-know-whats make a point of joining the National Organization for Women.

He must be prepared for ridicule, run for office within the organization, and make every attempt to change its agenda and bylaws. If he encounters any caterwauling from those women, he should file a lawsuit to force NOW to accept a certain percentage of men. He should run on the grounds that men are being discriminated against and are underrepresented in NOW, and attempt to get his fellow men to join with the express purpose of undermining that useless body and throwing it forever on the ash heap of history.



If NOW members were really interested in helping their fellow women, they would take on the entire Islamic world for its inhumane treatment of their sisters. Instead, the NOW gang sit in their ivory towers and take on easy marks within a tolerant American society.

I am sick to death of NOW's hypocrisy and utter uselessness.

*Mary P. Ingham*
*Citrus Heights, Calif.*

### IN PROTEST

As a witness to the Jan. 18 peace rally on the Mall in Washington, I was grateful to Byron York for exposing the Communists in "Reds, Still" (Feb. 10).

It took all this conservative's will power to keep from picking verbal fights with some of the more ignorant protesters. I wanted to challenge those decrying American "imperialism" to go home and enjoy an evening without cable or even without a full meal. Let's see these socialists put their money where their mouths are.

*Allison M. Bruneau*
*Charlotte, N.C.*

At the antiwar rally in San Francisco on Jan. 18, I rediscovered the joy of the public square. Each handmade placard was its own honest statement, a "letter to the editor."

I can't say it mattered much who hosted the event. People had come for their own reasons: to protest the civilian suffering that follows every war and the racist tendency to reduce the enemy to a gook. As for the anti-Bush bent: Hating Clinton was never un-American!

*Jay Martin*
*San Francisco, Calif.*

### MAGIC BULLET

In his Feb 10 article on AIDS ("Death in Africa . . ."), Rod Dreher writes that the success of Uganda's promotion of abstinence and monogamy is ignored by the politically correct. But Mr. Dreher himself is being PC by ignoring a far more impressive success.

The Third World has a magic bullet that prevents AIDS and that magic bullet is Islam.

Most Muslim countries have an infection rate of less than one per thousand adults, while the rest of Africa has an infection rate of more than one in ten. This clearly shows that religion can greatly reduce the spread of AIDS and other venereal diseases. If Christianity would preach abstinence and monogamy, it could be just as effective as Islam.

*Richard Bruce*
*Davis, Calif.*

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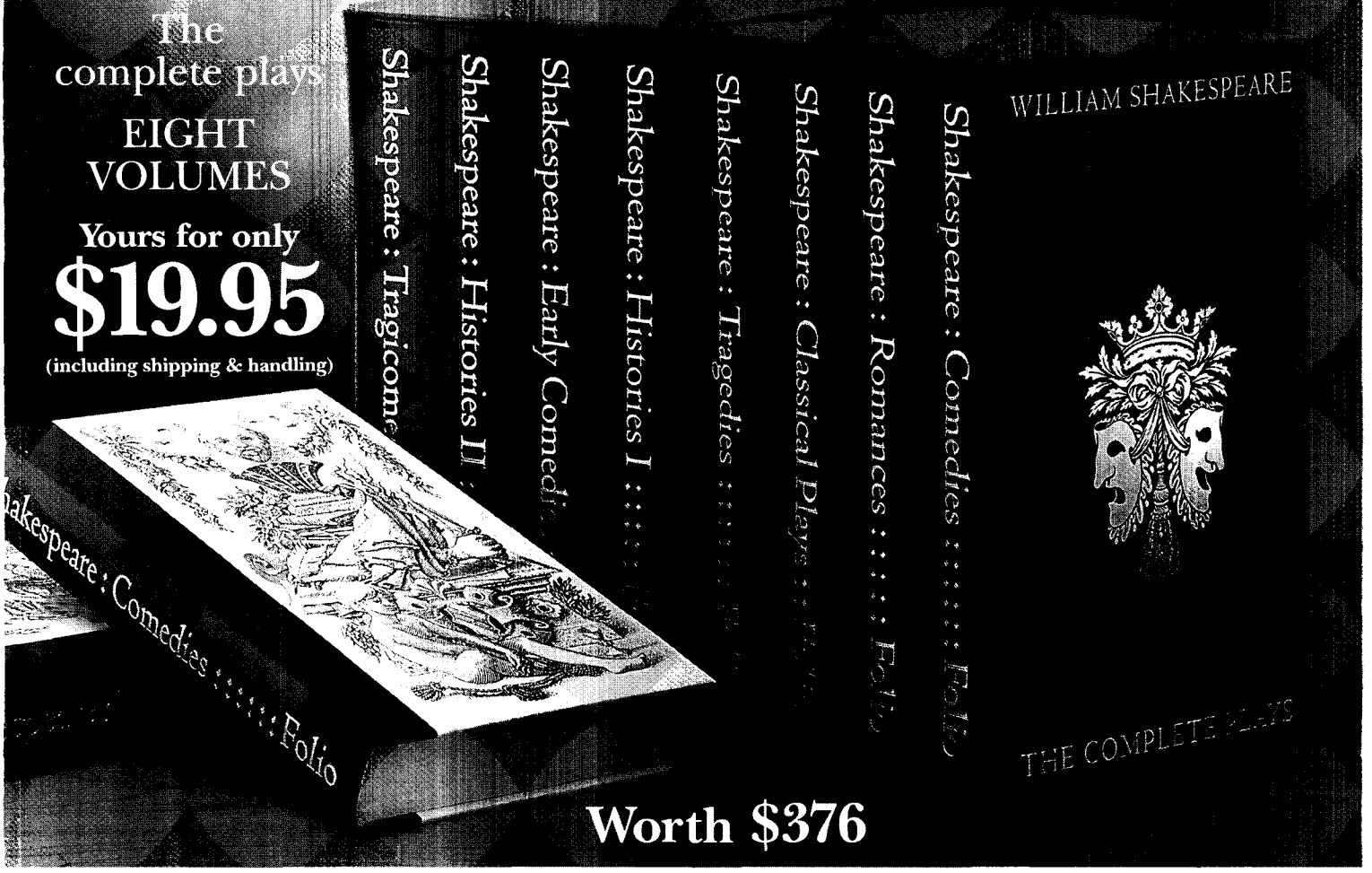


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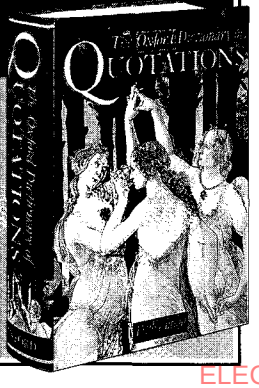


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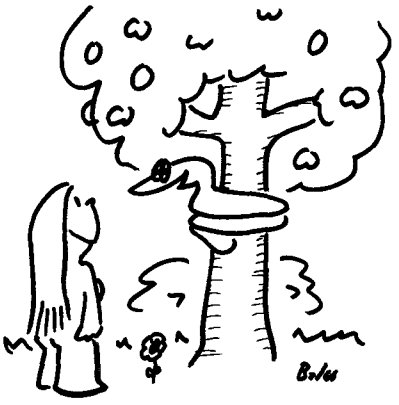

*"I know how you can get him to notice you."*

■ In ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, President **Bush** earns 64 percent approval rating. . . . "We need to remind everybody that tyrants don't respond to any kind of appeasement," says national security adviser **Condoleezza Rice**, on *Meet the Press*. "Tyrants respond to toughness. And that was true in the 1930s and 1940s when we failed to respond to tyranny and it is true today." . . . **Sen. John McCain** (R., Ariz.) discusses France, on Fox News: "an aging actress of the 1940s. . . . She's still trying to dine out on her looks but doesn't have the face for it." . . . More McCain: "If you embrace containment, you must accept proliferation, and proliferation—not just unchecked but accelerated—will make the violent century just passed seem an era of remarkable tranquility in comparison." . . . Secretary of defense **Donald Rumsfeld**, in Hill testimony: "We have entered what may very well prove to be the most dangerous security environment the world has ever known." . . . In Public Opinion Strategies poll, 63 percent support military action to remove **Hussein** from power. . . . In CNN/*USA Today* poll, 36 percent say Iraq poses "immediate threat," 56 percent say "long-term but not immediate threat," and 6 percent say no threat. . . . In Zogby poll, 49 percent say they would support sending own son or daughter to war to remove Hussein from power.

■ **Al Gore**'s campaign manager **Donna Brazile** says Democrats should run "favorite son" black candidates in some primaries, to steal support from **Al Sharpton**. . . . Sen. **Joe Lieberman** (D., Conn.) proposes creating National Homeland Security Academy, modeled on West Point. . . . Rep. **Dennis Kucinich** (D., Ohio) visits Iowa in preparation for possible presidential bid. . . . Republicans see pickup opportunities if Sen. **John Edwards** (D., N.C.) and Sen. **Bob Graham** (D., Fla.) forgo Senate reelections to pursue White House in 2004, and also hope Sen. **John Breaux** (D., La.) and Sen. **Ernest Hollings** (D., S.C.) decide not to seek new terms. . . . Republican poll shows Rep. **Jennifer Dunn** (Wash.) running well against Sen. **Patty Murray**. . . . Among Republicans, Sen. **Peter Fitzgerald** (Ill.) is seen as most vulnerable incumbent.

■ Sen. **Mary Landrieu** (D., La.) announces opposition to judicial nomination of **Miguel Estrada** and explains last fall's Spanish-language campaign ad that said she supports him: "I apologize to anyone who was misled." . . . Federal Reserve chairman **Alan Greenspan**: "I am one of the few people who still are not as yet convinced that stimulus is a desirable policy at this particular point." . . . Sen. **George Voinovich** (R., Ohio) on Greenspan's suggestion to wait on tax cuts until Iraq standoff is resolved, in *Washington Post*: "That's not a bad idea." . . . Sen. **Jim Bunning** (R., Ky.) to Greenspan: "You have been in this town a long time. Some might say too long." . . . Sen. **Rick Santorum** (R., Pa.), in *The Hill*: "I came to the House as a real deficit hawk, but I am no longer a deficit hawk [in the Senate]. I'll tell you why. I had to spend the surpluses. Deficits make it easier to say no." . . . In California, effort to recall Gov. **Gray Davis** (D.) begins, and former Los Angeles mayor **Richard Riordan** considers lending support.

■ **Bill Clinton** discusses biggest regrets, on *Today* show: "Well, on September 12, I regretted that I didn't get **[Osama] bin Laden**. When I see the number of people without insurance go up, I regret that I couldn't come up with a solution that Congress could live with." . . . Clinton on whether he would still pardon **Marc Rich**: "No. I would have waited and let President Bush do it because Vice President **Cheney**'s chief of staff was his lawyer. Then there would have been no media firestorm. That only happens to us. There's a double standard there."

■ Time for *New York Post*'s annual **Eric Breindel** Award, named for late editorial-page editor, a crusader against Communism and other evils. Award is for opinion journalism, and is worth $10,000, the most lucrative of its kind. Past winners include **Jay Nordlinger** and **Victor Davis Hanson**. Applications can be obtained from Germaine Febles at (212) 843-8031 or gfebles@rubenstein.com. Submissions must be postmarked by April 25. . . . More than 100 House Democrats file brief urging Supreme Court to support racial preferences in University of Michigan's admissions system. . . . In *Detroit News* poll, 63 percent of Michigan residents oppose school policy.

■ "Ridding the world of Saddam would be an act of humanity," says British prime minister **Tony Blair**. "It is leaving him there that is inhumane. That is why I do not shrink from military action should that indeed be necessary." . . . Britain begins ban on all tobacco advertising. . . . World's 32 leading scientific journals say they won't publish details that might help terrorists produce biological weapons.

■ House majority leader **Tom DeLay**, in *Washington Post*: "I was at a celebration of India's Independence Day, and a Frenchman came walking up to me and started talking to me about Iraq, and it was obvious we were not going to agree. And I said, 'Wait a minute. Do you speak German?' And he looked at me kind of funny and said, 'No, I don't speak German.' And I said, 'You're welcome,' turned around, and walked off." **NR**


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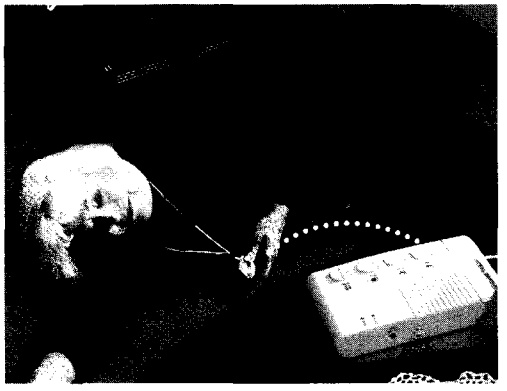

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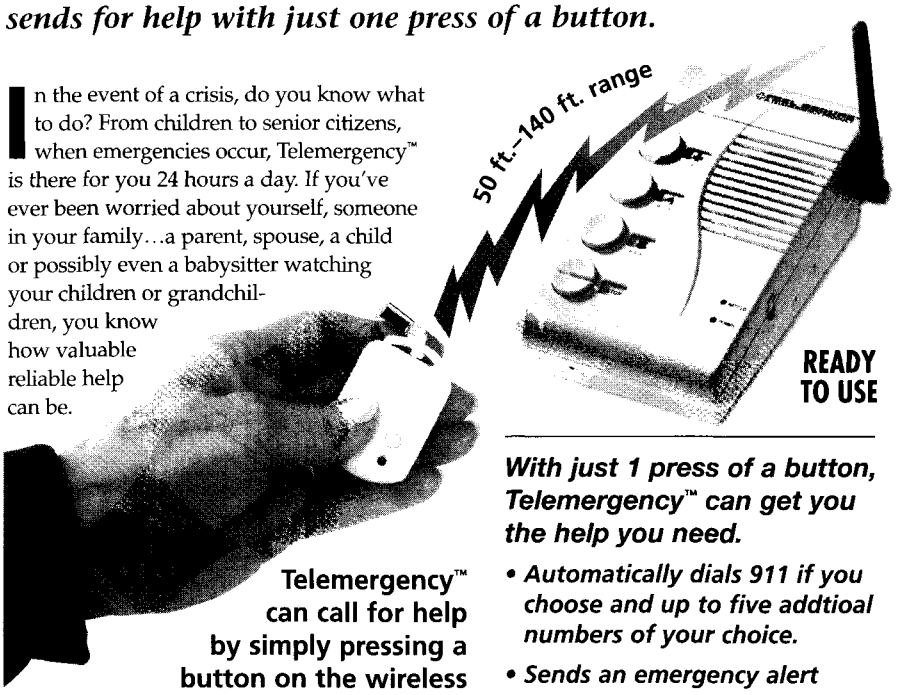


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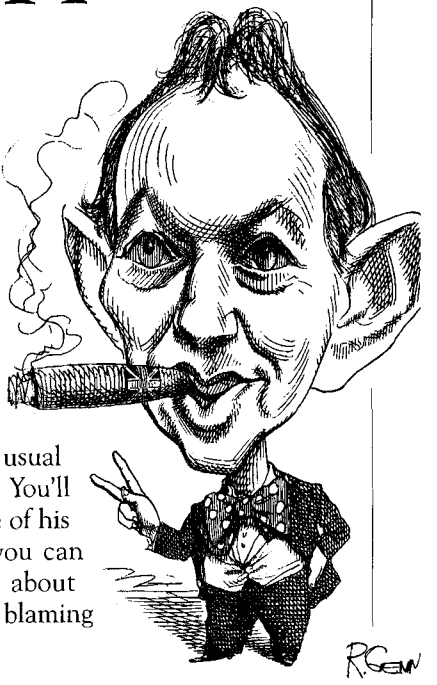
# THE WEEK

■ Just wait until the Left gets wind of Vice President Cheney's secret investments in duct tape.

■ The only use we can think of for this tape is to slap over the mouths of the people who want us to buy it. We are in a war. It likely will last for a very, very long time. A perennial feature of that war will be the threat—and, from time to time, the reality—of terrorism. Certain precautions will be obvious: Time to cancel that Lonely Planet trek through the Yemeni highlands. But broadly speaking a defensive strategy is no strategy at all. We should live our lives, at a risk less than the risk we take every time we enter a car, and let the government take all necessary steps to uphold American strength and justice.

■ In countries which the United States can expect to be its natural allies, public opinion is against President Bush and his stand on Iraq. Or so the polls say, and large demonstrations seem to prove. Leaders in Germany and France evidently believe that hurt to Bush is a help to them. But defeatism and anti-Americanism don't pass unchallenged. In a strong speech, British prime minister Blair says that he is not courting unpopularity but that leaders sometimes have to display the courage to do what they think right. In Spain and Italy, prime ministers José Aznar and Silvio Berlusconi are taking similar stands. Australia is sending forces to the Gulf, and a vote of no confidence in the Senate has hovered over prime minister John Howard. Should President Bush somehow let them down, or should things go wrong in a campaign against Iraq, all these politicians will pay the price of finding themselves rapidly out of office. Rudyard Kipling as usual had the right words for it. You'll be a man, he wrote in one of his most famous poems, "if you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, and blaming it on you."




■ The phrase "cheese-eating surrender monkeys," first spoken on *The Simpsons* and made world-famous by NRO's Jonah Goldberg, is a fine bit of abuse. But the impression it conveys of French fecklessness or cowardice is mistaken. France is pursuing, with skill and determination, an imperial policy appropriate to a nation of the second rank. It polices its former empire in Africa with a stern hand; in the Middle East, where it has tried, since Napoleon, to find a foothold, it is building up Iraq as an ally. Always, it seeks to curb and frustrate the United States, especially as a force in European opinion. If it can serve these goals by selling Iraq military and technological supplies, it will do that; if it can serve them by moralistic effusions on the U.N. floor, it will do that too. We should neither underestimate nor defer to them.

■ Alan Greenspan's latest testimony before Congress is being taken as a rebuke to the president's tax-cut proposals. Greenspan said that the economy does not need any stimulus. He also said that tax cuts would increase the deficit and thus interest rates. Any tax cuts enacted should be offset by tax increases or by spending cuts, so that the deficit doesn't rise. As always with Greenspan, there is another side to the ledger. He believes Bush's tax cut on dividends is a way of promoting economic growth in the long run, even if it is unnecessary to provide a short-term stimulus. He is more concerned that spending will get out of control than that tax cuts will be excessive. Also, there are three questions that he did not address. First: Granted that deficits raise interest rates, how great is the effect? Second: Would tax cuts, and especially the tax cut on dividends, so lower the cost of capital that the higher interest

**If bin Laden wishes to show that he is alive, let us see his beard.**

The latest bin Laden tape—but why do we continue to call them bin Laden tapes? They are voices, not images; the margin of error in scratchy recordings is greater than in grainy videos. If bin Laden wishes to show that he is alive and not, in Mark Steyn's immortal phrase, pushing up daisy-cutters in Afghanistan somewhere, let us see his beard. History is littered with bogus pretenders: the false Dimitris who claimed to be czars of Russia; Perkin Warbeck, who claimed to be king of England. It is obviously in the interest of the holy terrorists to keep the bin Laden franchise running as long as possible. Al-Jazeera will probably be broadcasting bin Laden tapes for many years to come.

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# Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome

**H. R. McMaster is a national security affairs fellow at the Hoover Institution and author of *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Lies That Led to Vietnam.***

For a brief period, it seemed that the 1991 gulf war had put an end to the Vietnam syndrome—a belief that the United States should avoid military intervention abroad. The painful memory of America's long, costly, and divisive war in Vietnam, however, retained its influence on the American psyche. Recent protests over impending military action against the Iraqi regime again invoke the tragedy and the analogies of Vietnam. Those simplistic analogies suited the purposes of their purveyors because America's collective memory of the war has become more symbolic than historical. To judge better the value of the inevitable Vietnam analogy, we might ask what, if anything, we can learn from our painful experience in Southeast Asia.

Most historians, sensitive to the complex causality of historical events, would answer cautiously. What good is history, however, if we cannot learn from experience? If we neglect previous mistakes are we not, as philosopher George Santayana suggested, doomed to repeat them? Indeed, the desire to learn from Vietnam remains one of the war's enduring legacies.

**The first step in learning the *right* lessons is to become familiar with the historical record.** It may be the uniqueness of how America went to war in Vietnam that is most instructive. There was no clear decision for war. Instead of exercising leadership, President Lyndon B. Johnson sought to avoid a decision and preserve a fragile consensus built on lies and deceptions. The administration's dishonesty allowed the president to circumvent the Constitution and deny the American people a say in the most important question a nation must face. As a result, Americans were at war before they even recognized that fact. LBJ's behavior was not only undemocratic but also removed correctives to what was an unwise policy. Not surprisingly, the way in which the United States went to war had a profound impact on the conduct of the war, its outcome, and its legacy.

President George W. Bush's approach to the current Iraqi problem stands in stark contrast to LBJ's approach to Vietnam. The Bush administration made its case for military action, and, after considerable debate, the American people, through their representatives in Congress, gave approval. The administration also made its case to the United Nations, highlighting the damage that inaction would inflict on prospects for peace in the long term.

Although the dangers of careless military activism are easy to imagine, the cost of passivity is more difficult to discern. In the 1990s, the Vietnam syndrome helped delay and limit U.S. military intervention in the Balkans. Those delays and limits extended murderous Serbian repression and actually accelerated ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Failure to intervene militarily often permits humanitarian crises to continue and leads to more dangerous conflicts.

**Rather than helping us avoid folly, the symbolic memory of Vietnam poses a danger.** Recognizing most Vietnam analogies for what they are—attempts to evoke emotion rather than invoke historical reasoning—can help minimize that danger. It seems as if the George W. Bush administration has kicked the Vietnam syndrome. Maybe it is time for the rest of us to do the same.

*— H. R. McMaster*

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rates did not matter? Third: While spending cuts are desirable, if Congress is unwilling to enact them should it therefore continue economically counterproductive tax policies? Congressmen will have to find answers to these questions by themselves, without pretending that Greenspan has told them what to do.

■ Proposing a detailed plan for Medicare reform would be politically risky for the Bush administration. But at this point, not proposing one might be riskier. No such plan has been put forward, even though Bush talked about Medicare reform during his State of the Union address. In the absence of a proposal, Democrats have had an opening to portray the administration's intentions as sinister. Their claim is that the Republicans want to force senior citizens to join an HMO in order to get prescription drugs. The Democrats, on the other hand, want old people to get drugs from an unreformed Medicare. Nervous Republican congressmen, facing Democratic fire and without an actual plan behind them, may retreat to the liberal position. There is a middle ground, one that the administration, as best we can tell, wants to occupy: Open Medicare to a range of health plans, not limited to HMOs, that can provide drugs. Bush may not be able to get that idea enacted, but his chances are diminishing with every day he tarries.

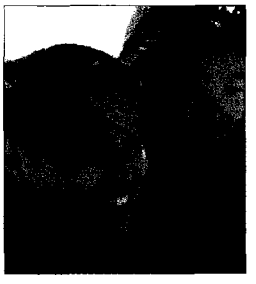
■ When the Bush administration proposed to create new accounts that would exempt most savings from double taxation, we strongly endorsed the proposal—more strongly than the administration appears to have done itself. The Left complained that the proposal was tilted to the rich, and congressional Republicans carped about its technical defects and the administration's failure to consult with them. The administration's response to these criticisms was an immediate surrender: It put out the word that it never meant for legislative action this year, and that the whole idea was the brainchild of the former Treasury secretary anyway. Well, we still favor eliminating the double taxation of savings. It's a pro-growth policy, and it would build the new investor class. We have the courage of Bush's convictions even if his administration does not.

■ Imams in America say the darndest things. Warith Deen Umar, the most prominent Muslim prison chaplain in New York State, earned $70,000 a year running the Islamic program in the state's prison system until his retirement in 2000. Since retiring, he has served as a volunteer chaplain. Problem is, he's not exactly cut from the Islam-means-peace cloth. Umar has been spreading hateful teachings for decades, and he has recruited other like-minded Muslim chaplains to the prison system, with funding from Saudi Arabia. After 9/11, the chaplains preached that Osama bin Laden "is a soldier of Allah, a hero of Allah." Umar told the *Wall Street Journal* that prison "is the perfect recruitment and training grounds for radicalism and the Islamic religion. . . . Prisons are a powder keg—the question is the ignition." In the same interview, Umar promised that "warfare" would come to this country if America continued to be perceived as anti-Muslim. Shortly after the *Journal* article came out, officials banned Umar from all state prisons. But what of his many converts? Perhaps we shall hear from them soon.

■ Col. Ilan Ramon, 48, of the Israeli air force, for a moment lifted the spirits of his beleaguered nation. He said that he wished Israel could experience the peace he expected to find in space. It was not widely known until the time of the *Columbia*'s crash that Ramon had flown in the 1981 attack that destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor. Comforting Ramon's children at a ceremony in Houston, George W. Bush said, "Your father started the job, and I am going to finish it." Good.

■ Belgium's highest court has ruled that the Belgian legal system has jurisdiction over war crimes or crimes against humanity committed anywhere on the planet. In fulfillment of this mandate, the judges ruled that a suit against Ariel Sharon may proceed, once he has stepped down from office. This, from a country where a notorious child kidnapper, child molester, child rapist, and child torturer was paroled from prison and then went on to murder. King Leopold, for that matter, cut off the hands of his black slave laborers (cf. *Heart of Darkness*). Since the battle of Waterloo, it's been all downhill for the raspberry beer drinkers.

■ In August 2001, Yang Jianli dropped by our offices for a chat. He was one of those heroes whom one almost trembles to meet. A Chinese democracy activist, he was at the time a research fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School and the director of the Foundation for China in the 21st Century, which he had established. He had been a Tiananmen Square leader. When the protests broke out, he was at Berkeley, studying for his Ph.D. in mathematics, but he flew home, to join and lead those protests. This was an act of tremendous courage.



At the top of Beijing's blacklist, he fled the country, returning to the United States. In time, Jianli earned a Ph.D. in political economy from Harvard, to go with his doctorate in math from Berkeley. We asked him what book best described the situation of the Chinese intellectual. He answered, "Milosz's *Captive Mind*"—a work that transcends every boundary and time. Last spring, Jianli went back to China for some investigation. Apparently, he was using a false passport. He was apprehended and has disappeared. His wife and children are American citizens; he himself is a permanent resident. Chinese officials will give his family no information about him. They cannot hire a lawyer for him because any lawyer would demand to see an arrest notice—and none exists. Yang Jianli is a demonstrably great man, and the U.S. government should take an interest in his fate.



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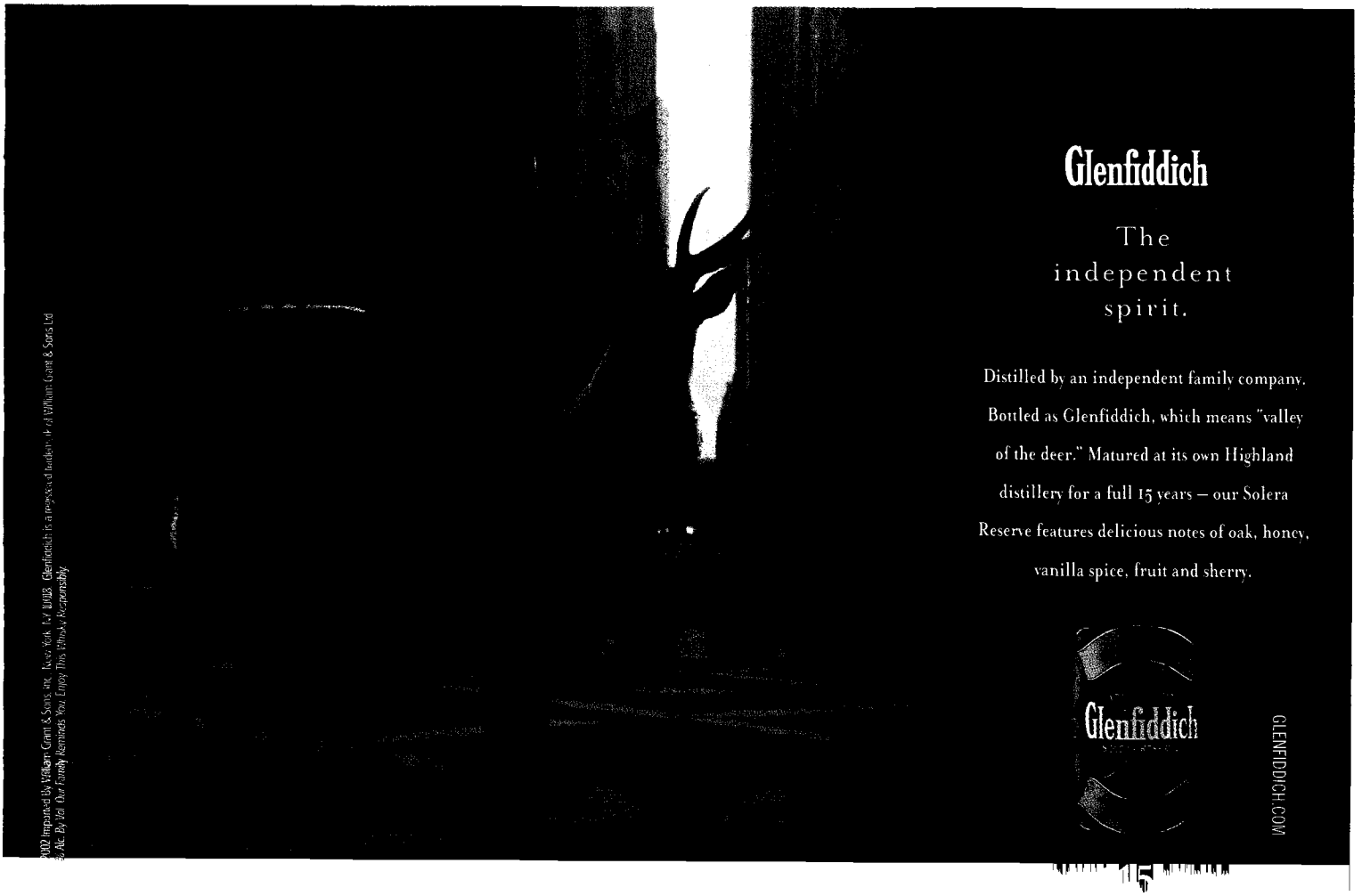
■ After more than a decade of life-saving missions over the Florida Straits, Brothers to the Rescue is ending its flight operations. The band of pilots saved thousands of distressed Cuban refugees at sea in foundering makeshift rafts. Their daily flights were dangerous: In 1996, Cuban MiGs shot down two Brothers to the Rescue planes, killing four volunteers. Now, the group says, they do not have the funds to continue flying. Two other factors contributed to the group's decision to close up shop: First, changes made during the Clinton administration calling for the repatriation of Cubans picked up at sea shattered the cooperation that had existed between Brothers to the Rescue and the Coast Guard; second, Cuban refugees are now more likely to arrive on high-speed boats operated by smugglers than rafts, and are thus less likely to be lost at sea. Still, Brothers to the Rescue was a thorn in the side of tyranny. We owe them thanks.

■ We have all heard the cant phrase "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." The obvious riposte is: Only if the second man has had his moral sense anesthetized. Case in point: Dedan Kimathi of Kenya, a leader of the Mau Mau terrorist movement of the 1950s. Kimathi was an exceptionally nasty piece of work. Initiates into his faction were required to drink human blood and eat human brains, these comestibles often extracted from the initiates' own relatives. Those who strayed from the true path were horribly tortured before being killed. Toward the white settlers he terrorized, Kimathi was even more pitiless: One was buried alive after having had his extremities removed and eaten. Sickened by these kinds of practices, Kimathi's followers eventually betrayed him to the British, who hanged the monster in 1957. Now the government of Kenya has announced that Kimathi's corpse is to be exhumed from its prison grave and given a state funeral. Says the current justice minister: "He died fighting for our independence and he was killed by the colonialists." Among the fingerprints on this sorry business are those of Nelson Mandela, who made a point of visiting with Kimathi's family during a 1991 trip to Kenya. One man's terrorist is Nelson Mandela's friend, apparently.

■ In 1997, a 26-year-old Jordanian woman named Dalia was stabbed twelve times in the chest by her father. But because her murder was an "honor killing"—she was suspected of being unchaste, having been seen in public with a man—her killer served no prison time. Thousands of Middle Eastern women meet the same fate every year; Dalia's story has been told only because her childhood friend, Norma Khouri, was able to escape to Australia. Her account, *Honor Lost*, has just been published by Simon & Schuster. "I want the world to know Dalia the way I knew her," Khouri told the *New York Times* in a recent interview. "I want them to know that she represents thousands of women who are still dying." Middle Eastern governments have persistently refused to condemn honor crimes. In 2001, asked about raped women who are



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# THE WEEK

murdered by their families for being "unchaste," former Jordanian minister of justice Abdul Karim Dughmi responded: "All women killed in cases of honor are prostitutes. I believe prostitutes deserve to die."

■ Eric Alterman gave an interview to *Esquire* magazine. Alterman, a left-wing media critic, doesn't much care for Rush Limbaugh. He commented to *Esquire*, "I hate to say it, but I wish the guy would have gone deaf. I shouldn't say that, but on behalf of the country, it would be better without Rush Limbaugh and his 20 million listeners." It's hard to say which is worse: Alterman's grammar or his humanity. Rush took all this in his customary good grace, saying, mainly, "And they call *us* mean-spirited?"

■ Dogs, as everyone knows, find their way around the world by employing an exquisitely refined sense of smell. However, when it comes to sniffing out the race angle in absolutely any story at all, no hound can compare with the *New York Times*. Meet Ch. Torums Scarf Michael, a.k.a. Mick, a 6½-year-old English-bred Kerry blue terrier. Mick won the best-in-show cup at the Westminster Dog Show, held at Madison Square Garden. (The "Ch." stands for "champion class," which is . . . oh, a class of show dog.) Reporting the event, our Newspaper of Record could not forbear remarking that had the winner been Mick's rival, Ch. Yakee Leaving Me BreathlessAtFranshaw [*sic*], then "his co-owner John Shaw of Hong Kong would have been the first non-American to own a Westminster best-in-show winner and his handler, Hiram Kenner, would have been the first African-American to handle a best-in-show winner." Just so you know.

■ Writer-director Ronald Maxwell's epic new film *Gods and Generals* is an act of public courage. Based on the Jeff Shaara novel, *Gods and Generals* examines key battles in Virginia during the early part of the Civil War, chiefly through the eyes of Confederate generals Lee and Jackson. The film dwells on the personal motivations, particularly the religious concerns, driving these men into battle. What we see foremost is *tragedy*: Lee and Jackson opposed secession and wanted slavery ended, but believed they had an overriding duty to defend their Virginia homeland. Though the film invites understanding instead of judgment, it is by no means a romantic apologia for the Lost Cause; rather, it is a reminder that history is rarely a Manichean struggle between pure good and uncut evil, but more often a drama played by actors with noble ideals, perhaps, but blind to their flaws. It is an indictment of the hubris of our politically correct age that a film asserting this perdurable truth about mankind's affairs will strike many as offensive. But truth it is, and conservatives should be grateful to Maxwell, and Ted Turner, the film's financier (yes, that Ted Turner), for daring to tell it.

■ On January 26, Palestinian terrorists loaded a donkey with explosives, waited until an Israeli bus approached, and detonated the contraption remotely using a cell phone. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals quickly responded by appealing for an end to the terrorist murder of . . . animals. "We watched on television as stray cats in your own compound fled as best they could from the Israeli bulldozers," explained PETA president Ingrid Newkirk in a letter to "His Excellency" Yasser Arafat. "If you have the opportunity, will you please add to your burdens my request that you appeal to all those who listen to you to leave the animals out of this conflict?" Later asked whether she had thought of requesting that the terrorists stop killing *people*, Newkirk answered: "It's not my business to inject myself into human wars."

■ In 1991, hoping to curtail the poaching of rhino horn for use in traditional remedies, environmental groups began encouraging the hunting of saiga antelopes, over 1 million of which then lived free on the steppes of Kazakhstan and Russia. Their campaign was a success: Barely a decade later, only 30,000 saiga remain, in what *New Scientist* is calling "the most sudden and dramatic population crash of a large mammal ever seen." Esmond Bradley Martin, who in the early 1990s served as the U.N. Environment Programme's "special envoy" to promote the use of saiga horn to Asian pharmacists, remains unrepentant. "In my opinion, it was the correct policy at the time." The saiga was not put on the "Red List" of threatened species until last October; scientists are now predicting it will eventually exist only in zoos and reserves. Chalk another one up for the enviros.

■ At Lombardy Public School in Ontario, the word "gun" was removed from first-grader Chloe Sousa's spelling test following complaints from her pacifist parents. Once she's all grown up, we'll be looking forward to hearing from Chloe all about how "GNUS KILL!"

■ The Symbionese Liberation Army was one of the rottenest of all the rotten "revolutionary" organizations that polluted the 1970s. It was one fruit of the "prisoners' rights" movement in California, the goals of which were reflected in

## THE DECENT THING

*Iraq will not be chairing the*
*Disarmament Committee;*
*Back in surreal Baghdad, they saw*
*The picture wasn't pretty.*
*And so, still making nice like mad,*
*Saddam withdrew—relieving*
*The Secretary-General*
*At functions when receiving.*

—W. H. VON DREELE


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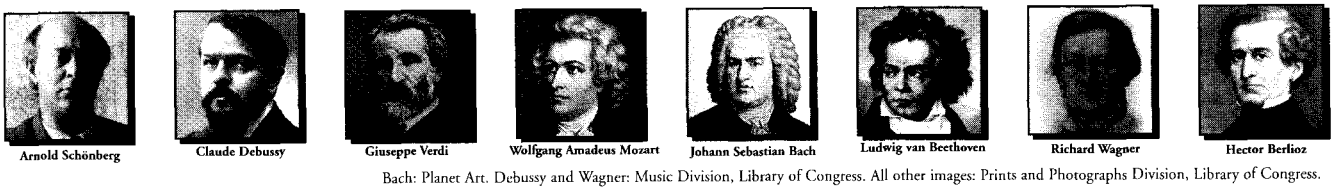

Arnold Schönberg | Claude Debussy | Giuseppe Verdi | Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart | Johann Sebastian Bach | Ludwig van Beethoven | Richard Wagner | Hector Berlioz

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the McGovern 1972 platform drafted in Miami. The SLA grew out of prison visitations by susceptible women and their male handlers, who conceived the notion that they plus former prisoners would constitute a cadre that would overthrow the racist government of the United States. Now, four long-sought members of SLA have been caught, tried, and sentenced to six-to-eight years. In a 1975 bank robbery, they murdered Myrna Opsahl, mother of four, nurse, who was depositing some church funds. The woman who fired the shotgun blast called Opsahl a "bourgeois pig" whose death "didn't matter." This murder was a long time ago. But six-to-eight, for murder committed in connection with a felony, seems insultingly light—insulting to Myra Opsahl, and then to society.

■ The Savoy Grill room was a London landmark through the entire 20th century. The late Queen Mother celebrated several of her innumerable birthdays there. Maria Callas, Noel Coward, and other postwar cultural luminaries frequented the Savoy Grill, as have generations of senior financial figures from the City of London (who referred to it as "the canteen"). Sir Winston Churchill (Table 4) was a regular, as have been Sir Denis and Lady Thatcher (Table 34). The decor has remained doggedly Edwardian: wood paneling, velvet-covered chairs, a somber green carpet, drab net curtains, chandeliers, potted plants, and tail-coated waiters. It was of course too much to hope that such a place would be left unscathed in "Cool Britannia." The Savoy Grill is now closed for "extensive refurbishing." Under the inspiration of trendy young chef Marcus Wareing and interior designer Barbara Barry, the place is to be transformed into something light, airy, and modern. Mr. Wareing: "I want it to be alive and exciting, not sad and boring. I'm 32, not 62." Out goes bloody red meat and Yorkshire pudding; in comes nouvelle cuisine and lettuces with names. Restaurants, even extremely posh ones, are businesses, of course, and business has its own imperatives. Still it is sad to think of all those 62-year-old upper-crust Londoners forced to go and eat among the oil sheiks at the Ritz.

■ Kim Jong Il has designated a successor, his 21-year-old son Kim Jong Chul. A third Kim ruling North Korea is bad enough—but it gets worse: This Kim studied in France.

**AT WAR**

## Action This Day (Cont.)

Last fall, after confronting the United Nations with its own dereliction of duty in compelling Iraq to disarm, the United States chose to give the U.N., as well as Iraq, a last chance. Iraq would have one more chance to be stubborn, and the U.N. would have one more chance to be bold. The policy has been rewarded with failure. Russia, China, and above all France are as opposed to action as they were five months ago. France, supported by Germany and Belgium, has spread confusion to NATO, refusing to allow the alliance to prepare Turkey for a possible Iraqi retaliation. Iraq is as slyly defiant as before.

Action could make these quarrels and hesitations fade like ghosts in the sun. Once the American-led coalition has toppled the tyrant, the U.N. will do no more than wring its hands, and France will do no less than demand a share of the spoils. The Pentagon has made good use of the delay, amassing the overwhelming force that traditional American military doctrine requires.

Going the U.N. route has been psychologically poisonous, however. It has allowed the anti-war Left, from the Workers World Party to the *New York Times*, to mobilize itself. At home, this has produced monster rallies of old peaceniks and addled kids. Abroad, the anti-war frontlash is a real political threat for Tony Blair, John Howard, José Maria Aznar, and other leaders who have stuck their necks out to support the United States. Meanwhile, America's search for world approval gives credibility to the assumption that we need it to act in our own interests.

*The U.S. should explore creating an alternative U.N.—a better diplomatic forum than the collection of tyrannies, basketcases, and enemies of the U.S. that currently occupies One U.N. Plaza.*

The U.N.'s predecessor, the League of Nations, atrophied when it proved irrelevant to the rise of new totalitarian powers in the 1930s. Italy's unchallenged conquest of Abyssinia in 1935 was a turning point. Has the United Nations reached the same point of terminal worthlessness? Not for some purposes. The world needs a forum for steam-venting; so long as it exists, the United States will not, as a matter of international manners, pull out. We must make sure, however, that we hold our own security paramount, and that we are prepared to guarantee it, unilaterally if necessary, by preference with the help of like-minded states. To that end, the U.S. should explore creating an alternative U.N. consisting only of liberal democratic states that would be a better diplomatic forum than the collection of tyrannies, basketcases, and enemies of the U.S. that currently occupies One U.N. Plaza.

The U.N. gives multilateralism a bad name. NATO, for instance, has been for decades a multilateral institution with a moral core. The recent French-German-Belgian obstructionism is a blot on a shining record. We can avoid further episodes by making plain that France, which is not a full member, should not assume a veto. In any case, the culture of unanimity that has heretofore prevailed in NATO was never a formal requirement. If a few states seek to leave another vulnerable to attack, they should be overruled.

As for Iraq, the cause of all these commotions: The Bush administration may choose, as it chose in the fall when it went the U.N. route, to give the timid and the willful a few more weeks to decide. If nothing else, seek-


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ing a second resolution might provide diplomatic cover for Tony Blair and other allies. But, in the end, what will best serve those allies is a swift, successful war. The U.S. should offer no further benchmarks—no conditions, no hurdles for Iraq. We require what we, and the United Nations, have required since 1991: forswearing weapons of mass destruction. Hide and seek is not compliance. So long as they hide, we will seek.

**THE VATICAN**

## When There Is No Peace

Writing in *First Things*, George Weigel has remarked that "the just war tradition, as a historically informed method of rigorous moral reasoning, is far more alive in our service academies than in our divinity schools and faculties of theology; the just war tradition 'lives' more vigorously in the officer corps, in the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and at the higher levels of the Pentagon than it does at the National Council of Churches, in certain offices at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, or on the Princeton faculty."

According to the tradition, the criteria for judging a war to be just are that it be for a just cause, have a reasonable likelihood of success, be unlikely to cause more evil than it prevents, be declared by a competent authority, discriminate between combatants and noncombatants, and be a last resort. For historical reasons, the just-war tradition is most closely identified with the Catholic Church. But its force does not rest on the theological and moral wisdom of the Catholic bishops—which, given how much they have tarnished their reputation in these matters, is a good thing. It has, or ought to have, force for non-Catholic statesmen because its moral criteria are, in the deepest sense of the term, reasonable.

Unfortunately, some Catholic leaders are saying things about a possible war with Iraq that are anything but reasonable. Witness, for example, the recent statement by Roger Cardinal Etchegaray, papal envoy to Iraq, that Saddam Hussein "is doing everything to avoid war." But clerics have not had to make claims that are obviously empirically false to distort just-war teaching. Angelo Cardinal Sodano, the Pope's secretary of state, says, "We want to say to America: Is it worth it to you? Won't you have, afterwards, decades of hostility in the Islamic world?" American policymakers should certainly consider these questions before going to war. But they need no instruction from the Vatican to know that, and Church leaders have no special insight into the answers. The just-war tradition leaves determinations of fact and probability and prudential judgments to statesmen, not clerics.

The Pope himself has been careful to reject pacifism, while urging, appropriately, that war be a last resort. The


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Church has, however, come close to suggesting that a war must have the support of the United Nations to be just. Anyone arguing that the U.N. is a "competent authority" has an uphill climb. To make the case that it is the only such authority is impossible. The Church is also being shortsighted. The United Nations has been its enemy on important moral questions, and will be once more when the war is over. Does the Pope really want to lend it so much moral authority?

Under the traditional doctrines, a war to overthrow the Iraqi regime is amply justified. The cause of preventing nuclear devastation or its threat is just. War has been authorized by the U.S. Congress and will be, prospectively, by the president. Their best determination is that a war would be very likely to succeed and would be likely to bring more good than ill. No targeting of civilians is contemplated. Alternatives have been tried, and have failed, for a dozen years.

It is sometimes thought that the just-war tradition begins with a "presumption against violence." It does not. As Weigel writes, it actually "begins with the presumption—better, the moral judgment—that rightly constituted public authority is under a strict moral obligation to defend the security of those for whom it has assumed responsibility." When war is morally permissible, as it is here, it is also morally obligatory.

# notes and asides

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I am concerned about the subliminal campaign waged by left-leaning authorities to move us into a mindset that resonates with their cause.

Three such phenomena come to mind:

1) On highways: When a road narrows, the signs invariably command us to merge left;

2) At table: A trained waiter/waitress serves from the left, takes from the right. You can see the effects of this happening, meal after meal, on the political philosophies of Ted Kennedy and Jon Corzine;

3) In writing: This note, like all Western writing, starts each line with reference to the left margin.

We should list all such subliminal schemes so that our unconscious is not trained to accept that left is right. Perhaps your readers could help. Unfortunately we cannot inventory our own offerings in this area; to do so would make the Left aware of what is subliminally Right.

Sincerely,
Evan Schulman
Boston, Mass.

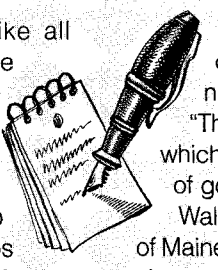
Dear Mr. Schulman: Yes, it is certainly a swindle you've got your eyes on. Up dextrosinistral reform!

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I seek your blessing on a new word: hippiecrit.

A noun. Usage: Confound these hippiecrits who roar off in their SUVs from the Wal-Mart protest, trunks filled with bargain booty paid for with Daddy's Platinum Visa.

It arises from a certain gnawing angst for those hypocritical hippies, who, in the midst of IMF protests, yak on their cell phones about their stocks withering into oblivion while brushing off the mud caking on their $95 Nantucket Red pants. I mean the word to be a close cousin to "trustafarian."



I crafted the word for one of my *Live Free or Die* college newspaper columns entitled "The Wal-Mart Confessions," in which I explored some of the acres of good brought by a new Super Wal-Mart to our depressed area of Maine.

As you might imagine, this was dicey on a small liberal-arts campus where Nader and Gore were the majority-party candidates, Bush the vote-siphoning distraction.

Respectfully,
Jay Surdukowski
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Surdukowski: If you think it's rough where you are, think of Vermont!

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Do you think that Hollywood would be so worried about oppression in Tibet if the country were predominantly Christian?

Sincerely,
John Lockwood
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lockwood: A sensitive point. But I don't see that Hollywood (or anybody else) is all that distracted by the continuing oppression in Tibet.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Bill: I have puzzled for years over the proper locus of the closing quotes for an idiomatic phrase or word at the end of a sentence. Herewith two examples from the NR Letters section of Nov. 11:

—I will grant their "courage" . . . but "nobility"?

—Ponnuru refers to critics . . . as "Cassandras."

I therefore derive the following rule: When a non-dialogue sentence ends with a quotable idiomatic phrase or word, the closing quotation marks should always be placed after the sentence-ending punctuation, except in the case of an interrogation mark, in which case it precedes it. The same obtains with an exclamation point!

Grammatically yours,
Jim [James C. Neely, M.D.]
Napa, Calif.

Dear Jim: I wish I had said that. I bet Fowler wishes *he* had!

Cordially,

—WFB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*Chirac at an EU summit on Iraq.*

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

■ AT WAR ■

# Getting It Wrong

## Conservatives, NATO, and the Iraq crisis

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

EVERY day furnishes another news report to confirm that a massive realignment of the West is under way. Just the latest—itself likely to be superseded by the time you read this paragraph—is that France's President Chirac rebuked the new democracies of eastern and central Europe for their support of the U.S. position on Iraq. He spoke in terms so petulant and undiplomatic—"they missed a good opportunity to remain silent"—that he looked like a railing demagogue rather than a serious politician. His threat to deny these countries admission into the European Union unless they start toeing the Paris-Brussels-Berlin line on foreign policy itself looked vain and foolish that same night, when the EU's joint statement substantially backed the U.S. position. One European parliamentarian pointed out that Chirac had committed a terrible faux pas: He had asked someone to choose between the U.S. and "Europe" (which, in this context, means a federal European state that would be a counterweight to America in world politics).

I say: Thank goodness for his undiplomatic petulance! For, in this gaffe, Chirac has blurted out the choice that underlies and explains all the disputes now raging within Europe. Within Europe, note—not "across the Atlantic." Despite the incorrigible habit of headline-writers of keeping "U.S.–Europe Split Widens" in permanent type, the story below it almost always describes how Spain, Britain, Italy, and Eastern Europe are united with the U.S. against France, Germany, and Belgium. And almost all the joint statements, communiqués, and *démarches* issued in recent weeks are designed to give an advantage to either the Atlanticists or the Europeanists in the vital struggle for control of the institutions of the post–Cold War West, in particular NATO and the EU.

Conservatives are supposed to have a special commitment to preserving the West. Yet they have been curiously blind to the threat to Western unity and American leadership posed by Europeanism since the Soviet threat imploded. And as the current realignment of Europe takes shape before our eyes, some of them have stepped forward to propose solutions that would weaken America's friends, strengthen its rivals, and divide the West.

Take, for instance, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial responding to a Franco-German-Belgian veto on NATO military aid to Turkey: "If this is what the U.S. gets from NATO, maybe it's time America considered leaving this Cold War institution and re-forming an alliance of nations that understand the threat to world order."

A few days later, George Will hinted broadly at the same solution: "Americans are increasingly wondering why they are in Europe. . . . With France fomenting worldwide opposition to a U.S. military action deemed by the U.S. government to be vital to national security, and with Germany drawing France into the embrace of semi-pacifism, NATO is becoming what Donald Rumsfeld warns the U.N. is becoming—a thing of ridicule."

Now, it is a longstanding aim of French policy to construct a single security system for Europe that does not include the U.S. Thus far, they have not succeeded. Other European countries—the 15 nations that supported the U.S. proposal to help Turkey in a 16–3 vote—have insisted that the U.S. should remain the leading European military power, that NATO should be the main European security organization, and that any EU force should be clearly subordinate to NATO. Yet if the U.S. were to leave NATO, the Franco-German bloc would get exactly what it wants—instantly.

It is at this point that Mark Steyn enters the argument, in Canada's *National Post*. Steyn sees very clearly that the kind of Europe sought by Chirac would divide the West and damage the U.S. He even thinks that I am insufficiently worried about this threat; he describes as "the O'Sullivanite tendency" a belief that when the dust has settled the U.S. and "the Continentals" will be allies once again. This mystifies me somewhat, since my much-reiterated defense of "the Europeans" was built on the argument that they were not monolithic, that the Brits, Spaniards, etc. were generally made of sterner pro-American stuff than the Franco-Germans (this has surely been confirmed by now). It is true, as even Steyn concedes, that the French may end up fighting alongside us in the Gulf, but that would be merely a tactical feint designed to disguise their long-term hostility to an Atlanticist Europe.

I am at one with Steyn's analysis; where



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we differ is on prescription—or rather, on implied prescription, since he does not set out a detailed policy. What Steyn does is argue that Tony Blair may be even more dangerously hostile to the Europeanist strategy than Lady Thatcher was, precisely because he is both an Atlanticist and a European. Hence, under Blair's influence, "it's possible that Europe will develop in ways that are not in France's interests." Perhaps I am over-interpreting Steyn here, but this sounds very like the old State Department orthodoxy that Britain will prove a very useful American "Trojan Horse" within Europe—with the added twist that, unless Chirac really does veto the entry of the east Europeans next year, Britain will soon be strengthened by a new wave of pro-American recruits. The *Wall Street Journal* editorial page takes essentially the same view.

The boldness of this approach—stealing the EU from the Franco-Germans—is appealing. And it may well be that this is the approach that Atlanticists will have to adopt if the U.S. will not encourage a more fundamental reshaping of Atlantic relations. But it is fraught with difficulty and danger.

The EU was established to be a regulated market internally and a counterweight to the U.S. in world politics. Its bureaucracy is staffed with Europeanist ideologues sympathetic to the Franco-German vision. Its legal system is built on the principle of encouraging "ever-greater union" and thus the erosion of national sovereignty. New member-states have to accept all previous Euro-regulations, however damaging to their economies. The EU is designed to enable its bureaucracy and most powerful members to bribe, bully, and manipulate the relatively poor new arrivals into going along with initiatives such as an intrinsically anti-American common foreign policy in return for subsidies from Brussels. Even if such tactics do not succeed in creating a rival European superpower—which they might—they would probably frustrate the emergence of a clearly Atlanticist Europe under U.S. leadership. And, in either case, Europe and the U.S. would be going in different directions.

To strategist Robert Kagan, that would simply be facing up to reality. Kagan's *Policy Review* article—now expanded into a book, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*—advanced the notion that "Europe" embodied a commitment to settling all disputes through multilateralist rules and negotiations, whereas "America" represented the enforcement of world order through power politics and the exercise of national sovereignty. Kagan's theory was the Big Idea of 2002.

The ink was scarcely dry on Kagan's thesis, however, when two factors emerged to demolish it. First, a series of polls showed U.S. opinion to be considerably more favorable to multilateralism—and more attentive to the need for allies—than he allowed for: More than 40 percent of Americans regularly demonstrated "European" attitudes. One poll suggested that fully 41 percent of U.S. women trusted the U.N. more than the Bush administration to safeguard American interests—a claim even Kofi Annan would probably shrink from making. The second factor was the letter of the eight European leaders—subsequently endorsed by twelve east European leaders—in support of U.S. policy towards Iraq; apparently, most European nations are run by people with "American" philosophies. So there is every prospect that the U.S. will usually be able to obtain from Europe the political and diplomatic support that the American people demand as the price of military intervention—unless Europeanist institutions thwart the peoples and their leaders.

And President Bush can forestall the Europeanists quite readily through some simple measures. First, he should insist that NATO remain the monopoly provider of European security. Second, he should call for reform of NATO's procedures so that a small minority of member-states cannot veto collective decisions. Third, he should encourage America's friends in Europe to make the EU a more flexible free-trade area rather than a more rigid federation. And, fourth, he should seek to establish a Transatlantic Free Trade Area—open to European states, whether they are inside or outside the EU—that would eventually become the principal Western trading bloc.

Yes, I know it's more complicated than that. But if conservatives don't unite around a practical plan for Western unity under American leadership, they can hardly complain if determined opponents of U.S. power like Chirac shape a different West and a worse future. **NR**

■ **AT WAR II**

# Remember Suez

## Nasser and the Canal; Saddam and today

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

In the approach to the liberation of Iraq, a peace party is gathering in one country after another, with demonstrations taking place in some 600 cities across the world. Under cover of well-meant pacifism lie political ignorance and moral bankruptcy. The peaceniks argue primarily that if the United States and its allies change the regime in Iraq, then the Arab street—indeed, Muslims everywhere—will rise in rage, terrorists to a man targeting the West. In their eyes, regime change is bound to be destabilizing. The implicit assumption is that Iraqis even more than other Arabs are basically bloodthirsty tribesmen incapable of all forms of government except tyranny. Nasty in itself, such a viewpoint is also worthless.

Arabs are not a mob of undifferentiated fanatics eager to defend the likes of Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. Like everyone else, they recognize tyrants and opportunists when they see them. They appreciate that since they are unable to liberate themselves, others will have to do it for them, and they look forward to that day. Many Iraqis in particular are educated and sophisticated. For years, dissidents and oppositionists have been gathering in exile. Preeminent among them is Ahmad Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress, and Kanan Makiya, the outstanding intellectual who advises him and has been drafting a post-Saddam constitution. Men of this stamp are well able to form a decent regime with agreed power-sharing among the disparate elements of their country.

**Mr. Pryce-Jones is an NR senior editor. Among his books is *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs*.**



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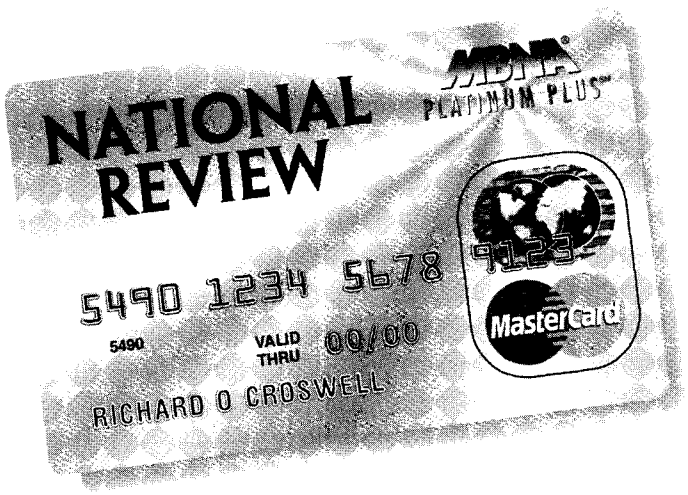


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One last shot remains in the peaceniks' locker. Military intervention in Arab affairs, they say, is imperialist, and in an anti-imperialist age this can end only in disaster. To them, the Suez campaign of 1956 serves as the mother of all warnings. In July that year, Gamal Abdul Nasser, the Egyptian dictator and prototype of Saddam Hussein, nationalized the Suez Canal. Perceiving this move as a threat to their national interests, Britain and France mobilized. For months the United Nations tried to devise ingenious dodges to prevent military action. As today, this only wasted time and offered scope for diplomatic wrangling, thoroughly establishing that organization's futility in a crisis. Unlike today, however, the United States took the lead in pressuring the U.N. to oppose military intervention.

Nasser was a master of the anti-imperialist rhetoric of the day. The European powers, it is true, after the world war had lost the moral authority to be ruling others. The field was open to nationalist leaders and movements everywhere, and the international order was therefore in flux. For reasons no doubt having to do with its own history and values, the United States saw itself as an anti-imperialist power, and therefore took Nasser and his nationalism at face value. On a visit to Cairo shortly after Nasser seized power in a coup, secretary of state John Foster Dulles declared that Egypt "is now on the threshold of a great future." From this false analysis arose the political bungling that followed. Nasser did not have his country's best interest at heart, aspiring instead to personal power and prestige on a regional and international stage. If he could play the United States and the Soviet Union off against one another, he imagined that he would create for himself the potential to lead the Arabs and perhaps the entire Third World. As a preliminary step, he had acquired arms from the Communist bloc.

After a delay of four months in deference to the United Nations, the British and French at last invaded according to a program clandestinely and clumsily elaborated with Israel. The planners seem to have believed that they were repeating the invasion of Normandy, insisting on a ten-day bombardment of Egyptian coastal fortifications. Nor were there Egyptian politicians waiting in the wings to replace Nasser, as Chalabi and the INC are in Saddam's case. But procrastination and incompetence might still have been overcome. Egyptian forces resisted hardly at all. The military operation was doomed only when the United States applied irresistible pressure on Britain and France to call it off. President Eisenhower and Dulles had swallowed Nasser's rhetoric uncritically.

Winston Churchill, by then an elder statesman out of office, is quoted as saying that he might not have had the courage to embark on the Suez campaign but he certainly would not have had the courage to break it off so unsatisfactorily. Washington also quickly understood that in opposing the British and French it had made a mistake whose consequences would be serious and long-lasting. At the end of that year, a fatally ill Dulles was admitted to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, and there the British ambassador Harold Caccia called on him. He was my father-in-law, and to the end of his life he used to describe how a penitent Dulles had then lamented, "Why did you listen to us? Why did you break it off? Everything would have been different if only you'd finished the job."

Nasser's ambitions rapidly took Egypt away from any great future into a poverty and misery that has endured ever since and now looks ineradicable. But the unexpected American support confirmed Nasser in his self-importance and the correctness of his worldview. Increasingly he practiced a blackmail strategy of turning to the Soviet Union for subsidies and armaments in the expectation of extracting favors from the United States. In the process he became a Soviet client, building the Egyptian model of a Soviet police state, complete with concentration camps. The resulting inter-Arab fighting, and the repeated Arab–Israeli wars, greatly extended the instability of the international order. Had it been successfully executed, the Anglo-French campaign would have spared the Middle East from becoming one of the bloodiest and most destructive arenas of the Cold War. As it was, the United States, like Britain previously, had no choice except to resort to strong-arm methods to keep the peace, intervening in Arab wars and stationing troops in several Arab countries.

As the Soviet Union was imploding, Saddam Hussein had his chance to exploit an international order once again in

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*Nasser is cheered in Cairo after nationalizing the Suez Canal.*



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flux. In direct imitation of Nasser, but with the advantage of oil wealth and a bigger and better standing army, he took the chance to maximize his personal power and prestige. The ambition was not wholly unrealistic. Had he been able to master Iran or to occupy and incorporate Kuwait, and then perhaps other Gulf emirates and even Saudi Arabia, he could have been an Arab Bismarck. To secure his place in history on an even more frightful scale, as a second Saladdin, he might have attempted to destroy Israel. The outcome of the 1991 Gulf war weakened him, but with considerable cunning, he managed to cultivate France, Germany and the new Russia enough to be able to play them off against the United States, as he is now demonstrating.

Some factors have remained depressingly constant since the Suez crisis. Trapped in its anti-imperialist rhetoric, the undemocratic Arab world is still unable to meet the West on equal terms. The U.N. is as incapable as ever of expressing anything except the diverse political agendas of its leading members, generating uncertainty and danger as it did in 1956. Just as U.N. proposals to devise terms for the changed status of the Suez Canal were useful to Nasser, so today Dr. Hans Blix and his inspectors are useful to Saddam Hussein, obscuring moral and political imperatives. Nothing, not even the whole course of the Cold War, seems to have brought the assembled peaceniks into contact with reality.

On the positive side, the United States since Dulles's day has learned that the maintenance of peace and freedom has priority over anti-imperialist rhetoric, even if this means military intervention. The Blair government agrees, retaining this same sense of responsibility. What an irony it is that the United States and France have diametrically exchanged their positions of 1956, to remain as opposed as ever. But France is incapable of taking up where the old Soviet Union left off, and waging a cold war. Together or separately, France, Germany, and Russia are sound and fury backed by nothing. Were Saddam, like Nasser before him, somehow to convince or to force the United States to surrender to his ambitions, chaos would replace the international order. **NR**

■ **AMERICA**

# Hispanic Like Me?

## Racial games, racial tags—the way the Left plays

LINDA CHAVEZ

"IT'S not good enough to simply say that because of someone's genetics or surname that they should be considered Hispanic." So came the official pronouncement from Angelo Falcon, representing a group of Hispanic leaders opposed to the nomination of Miguel Estrada to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. The group, assembled by Senate minority leader Tom Daschle, included representatives of the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the Southwest Voter Education Project. Falcon's statement goes beyond mere opposition to a Republican judicial nominee; it marks a new battleground in identity politics. Groups that have consistently argued that race and ethnicity should be compelling factors in everything from college admissions to judicial appointments now want the right to define just who qualifies for inclusion in their racial and ethnic categories.

Estrada has several strikes against him, according to his opponents. Though he was born in Honduras and came to the United States at 17 speaking mostly Spanish, he is from a middle-class background. More damaging still, in the eyes of the ethnic lobby, Estrada excelled academically, needing no special treatment to gain admission to Columbia and Harvard—where he earned his undergraduate and law degrees with honors. Worst of all, Estrada apparently holds conservative views on a number of issues, although his critics have had a difficult time coming up with anything he has said or written that might buttress their claim that those views are outside the mainstream of "Hispanic opinion." To left-leaning Hispanic advocacy groups—which includes nearly all of the most prominent and well-funded Hispanic organizations—any one of these attributes might be awkward. Taken together, they are disqualifying.

**Linda Chavez is president of the Center for Equal Opportunity and author of the memoir *An Unlikely Conservative*.**

For all their talk of "diversity," the advocacy groups brook no dissent from their own orthodoxy. For questioning the effectiveness of bilingual education and the fairness of affirmative action, I've been called a "traitor," a "racist," and a "heretic," and was even dubbed "the most hated Hispanic in America" in a cover story in *Hispanic* magazine. In the late 1980s, a Texas chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens passed a resolution officially declaring me a "non-Hispanic" and threatening with expulsion any member who so much as stayed in the same room with me. Similar charges have been leveled at others who ran afoul of the ethnic powerbrokers: author Richard Rodriguez, the late immigration activist and journalist Richard Estrada, and Republican congressmen Henry Bonilla and Lincoln Diaz-Balart, who quit the Hispanic Congressional Caucus because they found it intolerant and intolerable. None of us quite lives up to the Hispanic ideal set forth by Angelo Falcon and his fellow ethnic activists.

The irony is that none of us has ever pretended to be representative of Hispanics as a group. Certainly Miguel Estrada hasn't. Rep. Bob Menendez, who spoke for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus at the Daschle press conference, complained, "Mr. Estrada told us that him being Hispanic he sees having absolutely nothing to do with his experience or his role as a federal court judge." Exactly. Being Hispanic may affect our taste in food, music, literature. It may determine the way we celebrate holidays or even which holidays we celebrate. But for most Hispanics, it doesn't affect the way we think—no matter how much our putative Hispanic leaders may wish otherwise.

So if Estrada is not "authentically" Hispanic, who is? "As the Latino community becomes larger and larger in the country, as we gain more political influence, as we become more diverse, the



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issue of what is a Hispanic becomes more problematic," according to Falcon. Actually, defining who is or is not "Hispanic" has been a problem for decades—the term itself is tricky. Most Hispanics don't define themselves as such, according to several surveys of Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban-Americans, and others. The majority of these "Hispanics" would prefer to be identified by national origin or ancestry.

The word Hispanic is, of course, a neologism. While *Hispania* often appeared on old Spanish maps of the New World and residents of New Mexico sometimes referred to themselves as *Hispanos*, "Hispanic" itself is purely a bureaucratic invention. The term came into wide usage only after the federal government adopted it as the official designation for persons of Spanish ancestry in the 1980 Census, following several failed attempts to capture this population with other labels, such as "Spanish-speaking" and "Spanish-surnamed." Most U.S.-born Hispanics speak English as their dominant (and, in many cases, only) language, so the former term is not applicable; and the latter excludes the large number of Hispanic women who marry non-Hispanics, and their children.

Hispanics defy easy categorization. Unlike most American-born blacks—whose racial past includes slavery, discrimination, and prejudice over hundreds of years in the United States—the 35 million Hispanics in the U.S. have no shared historical reference. Some trace their history in what is now the United States back hundreds of years. My family, for example, came to New Mexico from Spain in the early 1600s and became American citizens in 1848, when the territory was acquired by the United States. But most Hispanics' ancestors came here more recently, in the flood of immigrants fleeing the chaos and economic instability of the Mexican Revolution in the early decades of the 20th century—or later yet, after changes in immigration law in 1965 and 1986 made it easier for immigrants from Latin America to earn permanent-resident status here. Today, about half of adult Hispanics living in the U.S. were not born here. Most, but certainly not all, Hispanic immigrants (especially Mexicans and Central Americans) arrive with low levels of education, speak little or no English, and will take years to move up the economic ladder into the middle class.

U.S.-born Hispanics, however—especially the young—tend to look pretty much like other Americans in social and economic terms. Although they have slightly higher high-school drop-out rates (about 80 percent complete at least twelve years of schooling, compared with about 90 percent of non-Hispanic whites) and fewer earn four-year college degrees (13 percent compared with nearly one-third of non-Hispanic whites), more than half are middle-class as defined by median household income and home-ownership rates, according to researcher Gregory Rodriguez. Discrimination against U.S.-born Hispanics, never as pervasive as it was against blacks, seems largely to have disappeared as well, if measured by such things as residential housing patterns and earnings (which are virtually identical for U.S-born Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites when matched by age, schooling, years of experience, and hours worked).

Despite these encouraging demographics, most Hispanic leaders, including all those in attendance at the Daschle press conference, maintain that Hispanics are a permanently disadvantaged minority group who need perennial government assistance—including preferential treatment in education, employment, and contracting. Facts don't stop them; they simply ignore any that are inconvenient, and dismiss any Hispanic who dissents as being uncommitted or, worse, inauthentic.

There is partisan advantage in this strategy as well. Democrats—whose election in many parts of the country depends largely on the votes of blacks and Hispanics—are nervous that Hispanics may be breaking out of the liberal Democratic mold as they move into the middle class. Democrats and the ethnic advocacy groups with which they are allied would rather keep everyone thinking that there is no such thing as a large and growing Hispanic middle class—much less one made up of people like Miguel Estrada, who don't need patronizing ethnic preferences to succeed and who might even harbor a conservative viewpoint here and there. It's in the Democrats' interest to let groups like MALDEF define what it means to be Hispanic. After all, who knows what could happen if Hispanics began to speak for themselves? **NR**

■ **CAPITOL HILL**

# Contra Estrada

## Things I saw at the filibuster

BYRON YORK

WHEN Democratic senators began their filibuster of the appeals-court nomination of Miguel Estrada, there was a lot going on that you didn't see on C-SPAN.

Take this scene: At one point early in the battle, Estrada himself was in the Capitol, visiting some Democratic senators. As he walked through the ornate hallways, he ran into none other than Democratic senator Patrick Leahy, the man who, when he was chairman of the Judiciary Committee, delayed Estrada's nomination for a year and a half, and is now working hard to kill it altogether. With no reporters anywhere in sight, the two men talked for about ten minutes—subject unknown—before heading off to other business.

Or this scene: On February 13, the day before lawmakers left Washington for the Presidents' Day recess, word went around that members of the Senate Democratic Policy Committee were meeting with the liberal law professor Cass Sunstein. In the past, Sunstein has coached Democrats on the issue of judicial nominations, and it seemed no accident that he appeared in the Capitol during the Estrada filibuster. Sunstein confirms he traveled to Washington to meet with Democrats, but declines to reveal what he said. Still, it's not hard to guess: He was one of three legal experts—the others were Harvard's Laurence Tribe and Marcia Greenberger of the National Women's Law Center—who appeared at an April 2001 Democratic party retreat to argue that Democrats should change the ground rules of the judicial confirmation process to make it harder for Bush nominees to reach the bench.

Or this scene: With the filibuster going on, members of conservative interest


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groups gathered in a Washington office to vent their anger at Republican strategy. Representatives of the Family Research Council, the Christian Coalition, Concerned Women for America, and other groups wanted Senate majority leader Bill Frist to cancel the recess to keep the filibuster going; keeping the talkathon alive on C-SPAN, they believed, would help grassroots activists build anger at Democrats. When Senate staffers explained that the GOP leadership felt it was better to go on recess and do that work in the states, one person in the back of the room cried out, "They should cancel their ski vacations!"

Meanwhile, on the Senate floor, the filibuster went on. Some of it left Republicans appalled, as when Democratic senator Tom Harkin of Iowa—not known as a keen student of judicial issues, but nevertheless a reliable party hard-liner—went to the floor to offer his thoughts on Estrada. "I never met him," Harkin said. "But I know the people who have associated with him . . . think he is some kind of right-wing kook. Is he a right-wing kook? I don't know. Some people say he is." (Harkin's comments didn't make it into any press accounts of the filibuster.)

Much of the rest of the Democratic filibuster was made up of statements about Estrada's confirmation hearing that could charitably be referred to as misleading. For example, Illinois senator Richard Durbin complained that Estrada had refused to answer a question about which judges he admired. "I said to him, 'Can you identify any federal judge, living or dead, whom you admire, whom you would like to emulate if you were appointed to the federal judiciary?'" Durbin said in a nearly empty Senate chamber. "End of question. Not a trick question, no. He said, 'I would not want to answer that question.'" Durbin concluded gravely, "That troubles me."

But just the day before, the White House had reminded Durbin that Estrada had in fact answered that question—in response to written queries submitted by . . . Richard Durbin. For the record, the White House said, Estrada wrote to Durbin that he admired Supreme Court justices Anthony Kennedy and Lewis Powell, as well as appeals-court judge Amalya Kearse.

On another occasion, Durbin said that Estrada had, during his hearing, been asked "a basic open-ended question which you can ask any law student in their first or second year. When you look at the history of the Supreme Court of the United States and 200 years of decisions made by the men and women on the Supreme Court, is there one decision you would disagree with? Is there one you could point to and say the Court made the wrong decision? I hope most Americans would say some are fairly obvious: the *Dred Scott* decision, which basically recognized slavery in this country; *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, which said separate-but-equal is a fair civil-rights standard—the list goes on and on."

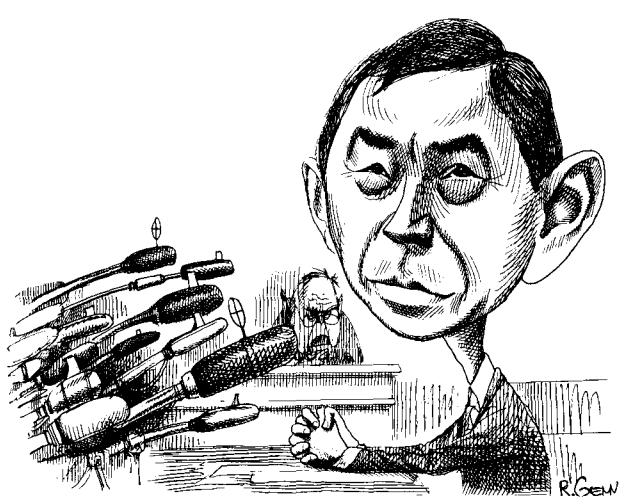
The senator charged that Estrada had refused to answer even such an elementary question. The only problem was that Estrada had not in fact been asked that question at all. The question that had been posed to him, by Durbin's colleague Charles Schumer, was, "Please tell us what three cases from the last 40 years of Supreme Court jurisprudence you are most critical of?" When Estrada declined to name any cases, Schumer responded, "Not a single case in the last 40 years?" The question had nothing to do with *Dred Scott*, which was decided in 1857, or *Plessy*, which was decided in 1896. Durbin failed to mention that in his Senate speech.

Also on the floor, Durbin and others claimed that, unlike Estrada, many Clinton nominees had willingly answered similar questions during their confirmation hearings. But, as the White House pointed out, several Clinton judicial candidates gave answers strikingly similar to those given by Estrada—and were in some cases less cooperative with the committee than Estrada had been. For example, Richard Tallman, a Clinton nominee for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, was asked about *Plessy*, and declined to answer the question, saying it was "entirely conjectural as to what I would have done" had he been deciding the case. Tallman was unanimously confirmed by the Senate in May 2000. Durbin failed to mention that in his Senate speech.

It all got to be a little too much for Sen. Orrin Hatch, who, as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, is leading the fight for Estrada. Working long, long hours, Hatch appeared energized by the battle; in the midst of talking nearly non-stop during the filibuster, he held a committee meeting at which he talked with Democrats for two hours about nominations and then spent another half-hour talking with the press. "It should never have gotten this far," he said of the filibuster. Estrada, Hatch said, had "answered every stinking, lousy question that was asked—and answered them well."

As of this writing, the filibuster is set to resume immediately after the recess. Republicans will be working a two-track strategy. On one track, their interest groups will be making phone calls and sending e-mails to moderate Democratic senators who might be persuaded to abandon the filibuster (it was just those Democrats, like Blanche Lincoln, Tom Carper, and Bill Nelson, whom Estrada was seeing during his visit to the Capitol). On the other track, Republicans will try to make some conciliatory gesture toward those moderate Democrats—perhaps having Estrada answer some further questions—to try to resolve the standoff peacefully. In the end, it's likely that Estrada will be confirmed.

But not without a lot more talking and a lot more misleading. So far, Republicans say they're up for it. "I'll stay here till hell freezes over, if it takes it," Hatch told reporters. "And as you can see, hell is starting to freeze a little bit." **NR**




ROMAN GENN

*Miguel Estrada*



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■ THE LAW

# Originalist Sin

## Conservatives, the Constitution, and affirmative action

RAMESH PONNURU

ROBERT BORK has called it "the 'heart's desire' school of constitutional jurisprudence." The key tenet of that school, according to Bork, is, "If you want something passionately enough, it is guaranteed by the Constitution." Conservatives are very familiar with liberals' tendency to accord constitutional status to their policy preferences. But conservatives, of course, have their own passions.

One of them is colorblind government. Most conservatives believe that America should discard all policies designed to discriminate in favor of blacks, Hispanics, and other minority groups, just as it discarded its discrimination against them. Minority set-asides in federal contracting, legal standards that pressure employers to hire by quota, racial double standards in university admissions: All should go. Moreover, conservatives generally believe that racial preferences are not just unwise and immoral, but unconstitutional.

The Supreme Court is considering the University of Michigan's racial preferences in two cases this term. Conservatives hope that the Court will strike down all such preferences as violations of our colorblind Constitution. They are upset that the Bush administration's briefs to the Court in the Michigan cases do not seek this outcome. So far, the only conservative of note who has dissented from this view is Charles Krauthammer. He argues that, while racial preferences are unconstitutional, it would be imprudent for the Supreme Court to abolish them, especially since they are already "dying a popular and legislative death."

But conservatives, Krauthammer included, are wrong. The Constitution does not impose a colorblind regime; racial preferences are unwise and immoral, but they're not unconstitutional. That's the conclusion that conservatives would reach, at any rate, if they applied their usual standards for judging constitutional issues to race.

The dominant view among conservatives is that the text of the Constitution should be read in light of its original understanding. The Bill of Rights, for example, means what the informed public of the early 1790s understood it to mean. It may be difficult to determine what the original understanding was, or how to apply it to the changed circumstances of the present. But those should be the goals. To depart from the original understanding is to amend the Constitution without having the country ratify the change.

Conservatives have made variants of this argument for two generations. They have been especially vigilant in resisting novel readings of the Fourteenth Amendment, seeing them quite rightly as the engines of—to quote the title of a book on the amendment by the late Raoul Berger, a prominent critic of the Warren Court—government by the judiciary. Yet when conservatives come to affirmative action, originalism goes out the window.

**The Constitution does not impose a colorblind regime; racial preferences are unwise and immoral, but they're not unconstitutional.**

The Center for Equal Opportunity, the Independent Women's Forum, and the American Civil Rights Institute—three conservative organizations that have shown an admirable devotion to the principle of colorblindness—submitted a legal brief to the Supreme Court in the Michigan cases. The brief concludes that preferences are incompatible with the Fourteenth Amendment, which says that no state shall "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The argument is based on the Court's precedents and doctrines. The authors do not attempt to determine the original meaning.

Perhaps this silence reflects a judgment that the justices of the Supreme Court, to whom the brief is addressed, are themselves less interested in the original understanding than in their own case law. If so, the judgment cannot be faulted. The Court's last decision regarding racial preferences was handed down in the *Adarand* case (1995). It was a major triumph for conservative advocates of colorblindness. None of the justices bothered to attempt to link colorblindness to original understanding. The majority opinion, written by Sandra Day O'Connor, worked within the Court's jurisprudence. In a concurring opinion, Clarence Thomas asserted that set-asides for minority contractors reflect a "paternalism that . . . is at war with the principle of inherent equality that underlies and infuses our Constitution." His only supporting evidence was a reference to the line in the Declaration of Independence proclaiming that "all men are created equal." This is something less than an airtight case.

In truth, the claim that the Fourteenth Amendment, as originally understood, bars racial preferences cannot really be maintained. In 1865 and 1866, radical Republicans proposed a constitutional amendment declaring, "No state shall make any distinction in civil rights and privileges . . . on account of race, color, or descent." The proposal failed. Colorblindness "died in the Joint Committee of the Thirty-Ninth Congress," as Andrew Kull remarks in *The Color-Blind Constitution* (1992). America would almost certainly have been better off had the no-distinction amendment prevailed. But the Fourteenth Amendment that actually passed was much more limited.

Just how limited is the subject of debate among historians, as it was among politicians of the late 1860s and early 1870s. On the narrowest reading,



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the equal-protection clause was meant to require states that protected the lives, limbs, and property of some people to extend those protections to all people. Introducing the amendment on the House floor, Thaddeus Stevens expanded on the point: "Whatever law punishes a white man shall punish the black man in precisely the same way and precisely the same degree. Whatever law protects the white man shall afford equal protection to the black man. Whatever means of redress is afforded to one shall be afforded to all. Whatever law allows the white man to testify in court shall allow the man of color to do the same."

Some historical support is available for broader interpretations. The equal-protection, due-process, and privileges-and-immunities clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment may have been intended to apply some of the Bill of Rights to the states. (The evidence is summarized by Earl Maltz in *Civil Rights, the Constitution, and Congress, 1863–1869*.) The clauses may also have been understood to guarantee other civil rights. Michael McConnell, recently confirmed to a federal appeals court, has argued that Reconstruction-era Republicans considered segregation in education to be a violation of civil rights and that *Brown* v. *Board of Education* is thus defensible on originalist grounds.

But not even the broadest plausible originalist account of the Fourteenth Amendment holds it to forbid all governmental discrimination by race. Nor can the amendment be held to assert an individual right to race-blind treatment in state-university admissions (or federal contracting). A few justices of the Supreme Court have held the Constitution to command color-blindness, but no majority has ever done so.

**The Constitution may not prohibit racial discrimination, but the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does.**

The Supreme Court should uphold the University of Michigan's admissions preferences as constitutional. But then it should strike them down anyway, because they're illegal. The Constitution may not prohibit racial discrimination, but the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does. It is a long-accepted legal doctrine that if a court can settle a case on statutory rather than constitutional grounds, it should do so.

Racial preferences in university admissions have continued only because the Civil Rights Act has been ignored. The Supreme Court's 1978 *Bakke* decision, which gave a green light to universities to give a "plus factor" to minorities, conjured the statute away by sleight of hand: Justice Powell ruled that the Civil Rights Act was a congressional attempt to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment. The act,


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therefore, must have been meant to prohibit only those things that the amendment prohibits. What the amendment prohibits is (supposedly) something for the Supreme Court to decide. Powell found that the amendment does not prohibit the use of race as a plus factor, and therefore the act doesn't either. It was the jurisprudence of a Houdini seeking to escape the shackles of law.

If Michigan's racial preferences are illegal, the patient reader may wonder, why does it matter that they are constitutional? Its constitutionality has two noteworthy implications. The first is that the Supreme Court is not allowed to strike down racial preferences that are not prohibited by statute. This means that minority set-asides in federal contracting and the portion of the Voting Rights Act that aims to increase the number of congressional districts dominated by minority voters—both authorized by Congress—have to stand. The argument for the unconstitutionality of these measures was always a stretch: The Fourteenth Amendment commands *states* to provide equal protection, and thus can hardly be held to restrict congressional action.

The second implication is that, if Congress wants to let universities continue to use racial preferences, it can change the law. In my view, it should do so. That's not because racial preferences in college admissions are a good idea. They're not. They introduce a note of dishonesty; they're a thumb on the scale of a competition. They foster a race consciousness that is unhealthy for a campus or a nation. They are a diversion from the task of reforming K–12 education so that black and Hispanic students can compete on their merits. They are a disservice to those minority students whom they place on campuses where they cannot compete, and to those whom they stigmatize. But universities do a lot of foolish, and sometimes wicked, things that the federal government ought not to prevent. Yale should be able to set its admissions policies as it sees fit.

When it comes to affirmative action, conservatives could stand to get reacquainted with free markets as well as with originalism. **NR**

■ **THE GOP**

# 'Governor Tax'

## This is not your grandfather's Taft

JOHN J. MILLER

WHEN President Bush announced his latest tax-cut proposal on January 7, the Republican Governors Association issued a strong statement of support the very same day. Colorado governor Bill Owens, the RGA chairman, called Bush's initiative "a common-sense plan" and observed that "a dollar spent in the private sector does much more to spark economic growth than a dollar spent on government." John Rowland of Connecticut hailed the president's "aggressive approach that offers real and compassionate solutions." Mike Huckabee of Arkansas urged Congress to grant "quick approval." Jeb Bush of Florida, Bob Ehrlich of Maryland, John Hoeven of North Dakota, Mike Johanns of Nebraska, and Judy Martz of Montana also chimed in.

Strangely missing from this roster was Ohio's governor, Bob Taft. Because he is vice chairman of the RGA, his views often appear near the top of the group's press releases. The reason for his silence became apparent the next day, when Taft put out his own statement offering faint praise for the president's "bold effort." Taft added that he was "concerned that the proposal to eliminate federal taxes on stock dividends may have a potentially negative impact on Ohio's budget," and basically asked the state's congressional delegation to oppose it. Furthermore, noted Taft, "I regret more money was not proposed to help the states [that] have suffered punishing revenue losses." In other words, the governor doesn't care for a key part of the Bush tax-relief package and wishes Washington would spend more—to bail out states that went on their own spending sprees during the 1990s.

The problem with Taft isn't his failure to stay on message with the White House (which doesn't always deserve the unqualified support of GOP governors). It's that he has compiled a mediocre record, and it keeps getting worse. Last September, Taft was one of only four chief executives to earn a grade of "F" from the Cato Institute in its fiscal-policy report card. "Bob Taft has been the highest-taxing governor in America recently," said the study. When I read that line to Taft on February 13, he paused for a moment, then said, sounding surprised: "That was before we proposed *this* budget." He was referring to his latest initiative, announced in January: the biggest tax increase in Ohio history, coming at a time when Republicans control every statewide office and hold supermajorities in both chambers of the legislature.

This is not your father's Bob Taft. That honor belongs to Sen. Robert A. Taft, who is actually the current governor's grandfather. He was the son of a president (William Howard Taft), a leading critic of the New Deal, and the first great political leader of postwar conservatism. When he ran for the GOP presidential nomination in 1952, the party's base rallied around him—only to see Dwight Eisenhower prevail in a contest that disillusioned many on the right. "Taft's defeat planted the seeds for Barry Goldwater's nomination in 1964," says Lee Edwards, a historian of conservatism.

Despite the gold-plated name, Gov. Taft has met few of the expectations his grandfather's legacy may have set for him. When the 61-year-old Taft talks about the old senator, he is quick to point out the man wasn't *entirely* conservative: "He supported federal spending on education and housing, you know."

Spending is the problem that's gotten Ohio into its current fix: a $720 million gap this year, plus an estimated $4 billion hole over the next two years. In the 1990s, Ohio's budget more than doubled in size. Only six states increased spending at a greater clip than the Buckeye State—and they at least experienced rapid population growth. Taft continued this spending binge into the new decade, and to keep pace with it he slapped $349 million in new taxes on


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businesses in 2001 (which was less than the $465 million he originally sought). Last year, he boosted business taxes by another $400 million and jacked up the cigarette tax by 31 cents per pack. All the while, state spending rose faster than the combined rate of inflation and population growth. Under Taft's current plan, it's supposed to rise 5 percent in 2004 and 4 percent in 2005. "We need new revenue, and we need it right away," said Taft on January 22, in a somber State of the State address.

**Taft now calls for a 'season of sacrifice.'**

The governor now calls for a "season of sacrifice," in which taxpayers are expected to surrender an extra $3 billion by 2005, mainly through a 5-cent sales tax broadened to include the service economy. There are also new levies on businesses, a 45-cent tax increase on each pack of cigarettes, a doubling of the alcohol tax, and a gas-tax hike of 6 cents per gallon. Taft proposes cutting a few taxes as well, and thereby insists on calling his plan a "reform" package. But he can't hide from the obvious fact that he wants Ohio's government to wring more money from its residents. "This is not what we wanted to do," he says when pressed on the subject.

Taft delivered something of an anti-tax message to voters last fall, as he ran for reelection. Everybody knew that budget problems loomed, and the governor refused to rule out tax increases as part of a solution. During the campaign, he said that "narrowly tailored revenue enhancements" might be necessary. But he also ridiculed his Democratic opponent as "Taxin' Tim Hagan" and left the distinct impression that new taxes would be an absolute last resort. "When people voted in November for this governor, they didn't think they would be voting for monumental tax increases," says Mike Gilb, a Republican state representative. Another lawmaker, Democratic representative Derrick Seaver, was thinking about switching parties prior to the budget mess. "That was before Bob Taft became a Democrat," he jokes now. "I'm sticking with my party." In the meantime, Governor Taft has earned himself a new nickname: Governor Tax.

Fiscal conservatives aren't the only ones displeased with Taft; social conservatives have plenty of gripes as well. "We feel betrayed," says Greg Quinlan of Pro-Family Network, in Dayton. When Taft campaigned for governor in 1998, for instance, Ohio Right to Life endorsed him. The governor worked with pro-lifers during his first term, but then shocked his allies last year by choosing as his running mate Jennette Bradley, an outspoken supporter of abortion rights. To complicate matters, Bradley, as a member of the Columbus city council, once voted to extend health benefits to the partners of gay council employees.

Bradley has attracted some national attention because she is that relatively rare thing: a black Republican. (She also became the first black woman to serve as a lieutenant governor anywhere.) When conservatives complained about her selection, Taft operatives launched a slimy counter-attack. The governor's chief of staff, Brian K. Hicks, accused Bradley's critics of sinister motives: "I hope we're beyond the point of race being a factor, but I'm not sure of that." State party chairman Bob Bennett made similar accusations. Both men deliberately ignored the fact that most Ohio conservatives' favorite statewide politician is secretary of state Ken Blackwell, who is also black. Ohio Right to Life supported Blackwell with enthusiasm, even as it refused to endorse any candidate for governor in 2002.

Conservatives do appreciate a handful of Taft's efforts. His judicial picks have generally been good, and he oversaw the state's first death-penalty execution in 37 years. He also defended the state motto—"With God, all things are possible"—after a court struck it down. There's plenty more on the negative side of the ledger, though: Taft hasn't made good on a promise to sign a concealed-carry gun law, and he refuses to challenge the collective bargaining and prevailing wage rules that drive so much state spending upward. "He's in bed politically with the labor unions," says state senator Lynn R. Wachtmann, a Republican.

Another major disappointment is school choice. Last summer, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Cleveland's voucher program is constitutional, in a historic victory whose significance President Bush compared to *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. Here was the chance for Taft, an erstwhile supporter of school choice, to expand the program to other cities and possibly transform the way Ohio educates its poorer children. But the governor sat on his hands. "An opportunity is being squandered," says David Zanotti of the Ohio Roundtable, an education-reform group. "We could actually implement school choice in a way that saves the state money over the long term, because a voucher costs less than a public-school education."

Even so, many school-choice backers are distracted by the budget. "For movement conservatives, it's all about fighting tax increases right now," says Republican state senator Jim Jordan.

When he announced his budget plans, Taft noted: "After my address today, some of you may be wishing I'd not delivered it at all." A growing number of conservatives are starting to think the same thing about his inaugural. **NR**

ROMAN GENN

*Gov. Bob Taft, R.-Ohio*



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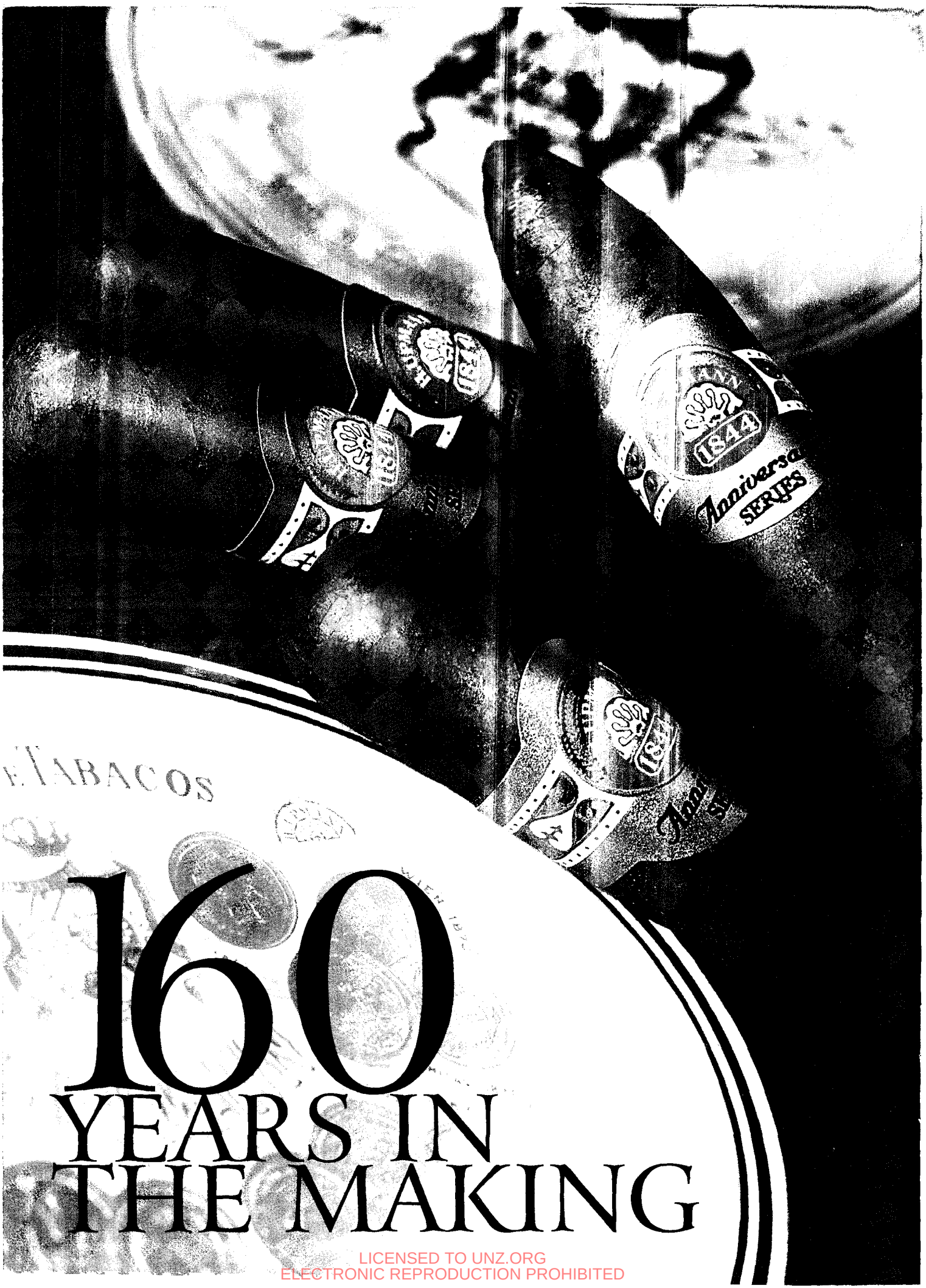


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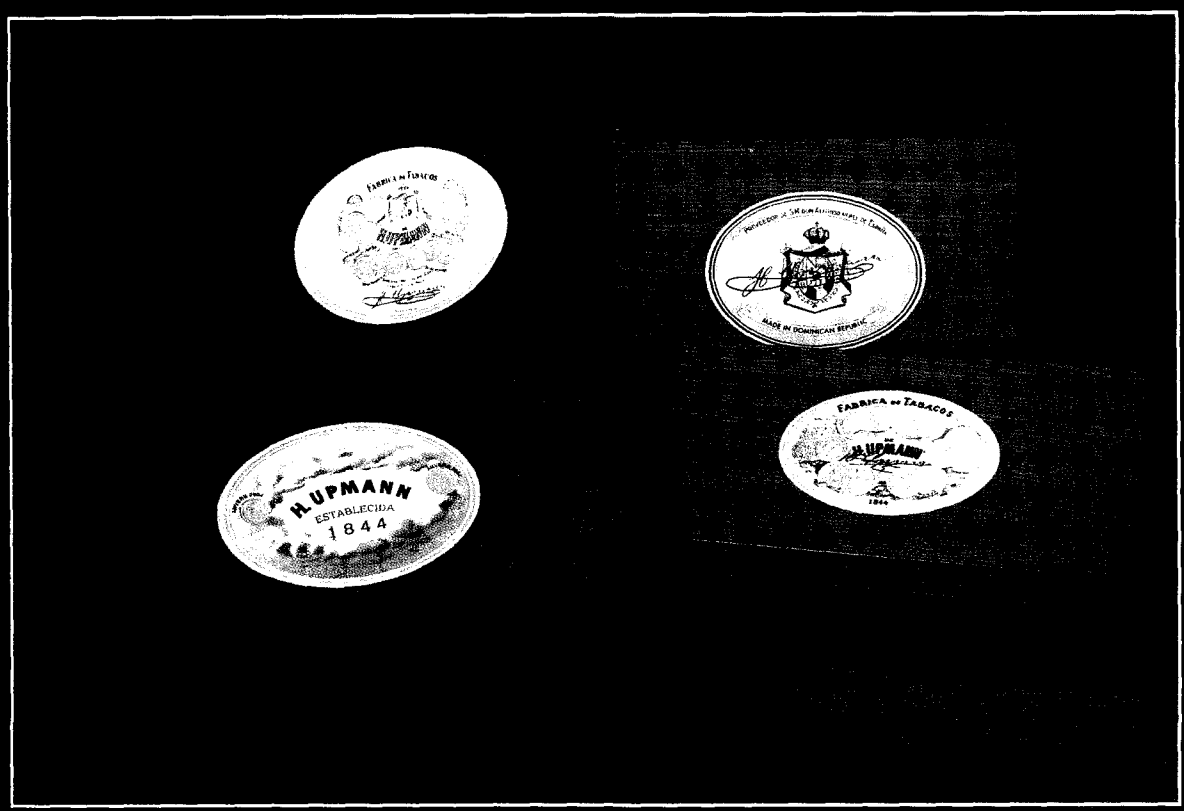


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■ COVER STORY

# Ministers of WAR

## The amazing chaplaincy of the U.S. military

BY ROD DREHER

THE shooting had long since stopped by the time Richard Kent arrived for his tour of peacekeeping duty in Bosnia. But what the American soldier saw in an abandoned warehouse in a village called Kravica still haunts his dreams.

Eight years before Kent's arrival, Serbian forces crammed a thousand Bosnian Muslim men into the warehouse, where, according to the United Nations' official report, they were "killed by small arms fire and grenades. Visiting the Kravica warehouse several months later, United Nations personnel were able to see hair, blood and human tissue caked to the inside walls of this building." By the time Kent and his fellow soldiers saw the building, it was being used to store tractors and manure. The only sign of the barn's past was a black mold covering the walls, feeding off the rotting human flesh and blood embedded in its crevices.

Kent went to Bosnia a devout Catholic, but nothing they taught him in catechism class back in Michigan prepared him for that moldy barn in Kravica. "When evil of this magnitude is encountered, simple piety is not enough," Kent says today, from his home in northern Virginia. "Why does a God who has protected me, a soldier, through dangers large and small—where was He when the men murdered in this warehouse screamed for His mercy? Why has He allowed genocide?"

It is at this point, when the cruelty that a soldier has witnessed threatens to overwhelm his understanding and devour his soul, that he may go in search of a chaplain. Dave Peterson, a Presbyterian minister and retired Army colonel who served as a top chaplain in Operation Desert Storm, says the gruesome slaughter of fleeing Iraqi troops on the so-called "highway of death" back to Baghdad devastated many Americans who fought in that battle. "We had chaplains talking to some of those troops for a significant amount of time after the fact," Peterson says. "A significant number of troops just broke down after that. It left a mark, it really did."

If most people think of military chaplains at all, the image that comes to mind is kindly but slightly befuddled Father Mulcahy, from M*A*S*H. In fact, the more dangerous the mission, the more vital chaplains are to its success. The nearly 1,400 chaplains in the U.S. armed forces—nearly all Christian, except for about 30 Jewish and 15 Muslim clergy—must be on-the-spot counselors to men and women living through a kind of trauma that few civilians will ever experience. They prepare soldiers to kill and to die without losing their souls. They help soldiers re-integrate into the lives of their families. Chaplains ministering stateside help military families left behind get through months of emotional and sometimes financial hardship.

And, most important, on the battlefield they serve as a sign of the presence of the just and good God in the midst of hell on earth. Chaplains work on or very close to the front, and do so unarmed. To soldiers under fire, the chaplain's presence is a sign that God has not abandoned them. A chaplain's importance to the morale of combat soldiers is so central that if his courage falters during fighting, commanders must immediately



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replace him, or risk the collapse of the entire unit. The things soldiers in combat are asked to do and to suffer are so extreme that, in many cases, only a belief that God is with them enables them to endure.

"Courage is really fear that's said its prayers," says Father Vincent J. Inghilterra, a top Army colonel and Catholic priest who has been a military chaplain for 34 years. "The truth is, there's no way we can do anything without a deep spiritual life and dependence on God. When you're a soldier, you are there alone, you're very mortal, you have a mission and you don't know if you're going to survive. We chaplains bring the presence of God into every situation, so that wherever our soldiers find themselves, they are not devoid of God."

Talking to these men, one is struck by their moral realism, and how starkly it contrasts with the effete sentimentality you find among so many clergymen today. Theirs is a sterner faith, a manlier piety than mainstream America is accustomed to. It has to be, because the world beyond our shores is filled with hot, cruel places, lands where a faith that has had its moral backbone turned to aspic by our decadent, Oprah-cized culture cannot hope to survive. U.S. troops aren't the only Americans who could stand to hear the testimony of military chaplains in these dire days.

BETTMANN/CORBIS

**AN AMERICAN TRADITION**

The presence of religious leaders among armies is an ancient custom. The Bible records that the Israelites brought their priests with them into battle. The Romans did as well, and had their pagan priests perform ritual sacrifices and read auguries from animal entrails on the eve of battle. The word "chaplain" derives from the early Christian era. In the 4th century, a Roman soldier, Martin of Tours, is said to have divided his military cloak and given half to a beggar he found shivering in the cold. That night, he had a mystical vision in which he saw that the beggar was actually Jesus Christ. After converting to Christianity, Martin became a devout churchman, and when he died, he was canonized, becoming a patron saint of France. The Frankish kings would carry St. Martin's cloak—called in Latin *cappa*—into battle as a holy relic. The priest who cared for the cloak was called a *cappellanus*, and ultimately all priests who served the military were called *cappellani*. The French translation was *chapelains*, which is where the English word comes from.

The Middle Ages produced a number of sword-bearing warrior-priests, but by the Renaissance, chaplains played chiefly a non-combatant role in the military. In 1775, the Continental Congress gave birth to the military chaplaincy in the United States when it instituted a paid chaplaincy for the army. "The blessing and protection of Heaven are at all times necessary, but especially so in times of public distress and danger," George Washington wrote on July 9, 1776, approving the decision. Piety continued to be a tradition in American military ranks.

Some of the most celebrated and beloved soldiers in American history were chaplains. Father Francis P. Duffy of the Fighting 69th worked for two days straight during a battle, tending the sick and the dying, and emerged as one of World War I's legendary figures. During World War II, the "Four Chaplains"—a rabbi, a Catholic priest, and two Protestant ministers—died heroically when their troop transport ship was torpedoed in the north Atlantic. The chaplains calmly distributed life jackets to soldiers abandoning the sinking ship, and when the supply was gone, each chaplain removed his own life jacket to give to a young soldier. The four went down with the ship, in prayer, and were later celebrated for their sacrifice, and interreligious brotherhood, by a special congressional medal struck in their honor.

**Theirs is a sterner faith, a manlier piety than mainstream America is accustomed to. It has to be.**

In more recent times, Father Vincent Capodanno, a beloved Marine lieutenant who was killed ministering to his men during a firefight in Vietnam, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Though his right hand had been nearly severed in the battle, Capodanno would not leave the battlefield, and died there. "Everywhere I go in the military, people know about Father Capodanno," says Father Daniel Mode, a Navy chaplain and biographer of the "Grunt Padre." "I've met almost a hundred of the guys who served with him. They remember so many details about him, and the physical expressions they use when they talk about him



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tell you that he had an amazing impact on their lives."

When you talk to military chaplains about why they chose this relatively rare vocation, you inevitably find a special love for soldiers, sailors, and military life, as well as a missionary hunger to be a witness for God in extreme life-or-death situations. You will also often hear Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German evangelical pastor martyred by the Nazis after they learned of his role in a failed plot to assassinate Hitler, invoked as a role model. "He rejected a comfortable appointment in America to go back to Germany during the Nazi persecutions," says Army chaplain Timothy Mallard. "He said he'd have no moral right to stand with his people after the war if he didn't stand with them now. I feel that way too."

Chaplains in today's military have to have a master's degree in divinity, or the equivalent, and two years of ministerial experience in a church, synagogue, or mosque before they are considered for active duty. "They come to us as civilians right off the street," says Chaplain Brent Causey, a senior instructor at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School at Fort Jackson, S.C. "We tell them to come in physical shape, but some are better off than others. Our responsibility is to make sure in three months they can pass an Army physical-fitness test. We teach them all the same skills a soldier needs, except for how to fire a weapon."

There is intense preparation for counseling, and learning how to minister to soldiers who are not part of the chaplain's own religious tradition. And then there is the matter of learning how to prepare soldiers spiritually for death—and for the task of killing others. To many clergy outside the military, an ordained minister helping a man get comfortable with taking another man's life is a betrayal of the clerical mission. Military chaplains, however, understand that in a fallen and imperfect world, war (to quote Gen. Colin Powell) should be a last resort, but it should be a resort. ("If we're not going to war with a tear in our eyes and our hearts broken, we aren't coming at it from the right place," one chaplain told me.) This is what they tell the troops. They also give them a theological grounding in just-war theory, which attempts to set out conditions under which violence, even killing, is the morally responsible thing to do.

"Two things are necessary to prepare soldiers to apprehend or kill," says Navy chaplain Eric Verhulst. "They must believe [the enemy combatant] is indeed a threat to the United States—to peace—and that killing him is therefore necessary in order to protect other lives; and that they are not personally connected with [the enemy combatant], but are acting solely as disinterested agents of the state. One person killing another over personal issues is murder. A soldier, in uniform, as the designated representative of his government, acting on behalf of a nation to remove a threat to that nation's peace and security—that is war."

In truth, pacifist-minded soldiers are scarce in the volunteer military. Most troops accept that war, and all it entails, can be just. What they most want from chaplains is the assurance that, come what may, God will be there with them; if they don't come back alive, that the sacrifice will have been worth it; and that there's something better waiting for them on the other side. "That stuff sounds like a cliché, but it's true," says Chaplain Maurice Campbell. "Karl Barth wrote volumes and volumes of systematic theology, and at the end of his life, he was asked what he learned. He simply said, 'Jesus loves me, this I know.'"

In the field, chaplains face serious challenges helping soldiers coping with stress and loneliness stay morally straight. Retired chaplain Dave Peterson, whose first tour of duty was in Vietnam, says the bitter experience of that war taught him that command leadership has to establish conditions that make it easier for troops to live up to high standards of behavior: "I concluded that one reason we can't get past the Vietnam experience is because so many people broke their moral code, and got into sex and drugs and things like that. America lost part of its soul in Vietnam. There was bad leadership." Serving on Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf's staff in Desert Storm, Peterson helped the general draft the Islamic-sensitive code of conduct strictly forbidding drugs, alcohol, pornography, and prostitution among Desert Storm forces. Despite this—in fact, he believes, because of it—Peterson says he has never seen troop morale higher.

**Military chaplains understand that in a fallen and imperfect world, war should be a last resort, but it should be a resort.**

### WARRIORS FOR JUSTICE

It has not escaped the notice of men and women in uniform that quite a number of religious leaders in civilian life have been outspoken opponents of war against Saddam Hussein. None of the chaplains with whom I spoke would directly criticize their anti-war civilian colleagues. Yet some did say the clerical pacifism leaves many soldiers angry, confused, betrayed, and even spiteful toward faith. "These pronouncements tend to reinforce the notion that religion is for wimps, for prissy-pants, for frilly-suited morons—and those are among the more gentle statements I hear," says Chaplain Verhulst. "It frustrates me, because I know that notion is false, but all I can do is provide a counter-example."

As men and women of faith deliberate the morality of war with Iraq, it is a travesty that more of them haven't had the perspective of military chaplains, that virtually the only religious voices heard in the public square are coming from the anti-war corner. The divide between military and civilian clergy over the Iraq war is philosophically very deep. It cuts to the core of one's belief in evil, and the nature of human beings. Military clergy who have been with American troops in war



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zones have seen a side of humanity that bishops in well-appointed chanceries and pastors sitting in suburban middle-class comfort, pondering therapeutic approaches to the mystery of iniquity, never see. This is what Philip M. Hannan, the retired Catholic archbishop of New Orleans and a World War II military chaplain, was getting at last fall when he criticized his fellow American bishops for their pacifist pronouncements on the Iraq war. Hannan, 89, who was with G.I.'s when they liberated two concentration camps, remarked at the time that the bishops had no experience with tyranny, and had no idea how to cope with it.

"I've stared into the face of evil," says Chaplain Inghilterra, who will soon take over as chief chaplain for U.S. armed forces in Europe and the Middle East. "We [chaplains] have actually seen the oppression, the devastation, the hopelessness, the absolutely inexplicable, irrational hatred a person can have against another human being. It astounds me. But evil definitely exists, and what we are dealing with in this [Middle East] situation is evil. There's only one way to deal with that kind of evil, and that's to confront it, with force if necessary."

Some of the chaplains say the failure of contemporary American society to grasp the true nature of the evil we face means the country is spiritually unprepared for war and its sacrifices. The civilian clergy is not particularly helpful on this point. "There are a lot of people living in denial, even though right now there are Humvees with Stinger missiles patrolling Washington," says one experienced chaplain. "The battlefront is now here at home. And it's going to get worse before it gets better."

Military clergy have been dealing with this chasm in understanding with their civilian counterparts since at least the Vietnam era. When Father Capodanno, a Maryknoll priest, returned from a year spent ministering on the battlefields of southeast Asia, his fellow Maryknollers greeted him with indifference at best and scorn at worst. "They didn't want to hear about it. They didn't know, and they didn't want to know, because they were anti-war," says Chaplain Mode, Capodanno's biographer. "Father Capodanno immediately wanted to go back and be with his men."

This bond of brotherhood forged in extreme hardship is intensely strong. There is only one word for it: love. You can hear it in the voices of chaplains who have ministered in combat zones. When Chaplain Inghilterra talks about America's soldiers as "the hope and glory of our nation," it's not patriotic cant. He was present during Desert Storm when an Iraqi Scud missile killed "28 of my kids," and he immediately went to work. "One kid was holding on to me. Basically he was gone, he wasn't going to survive. He was just holding on to me. For this kid, I represented the presence of God. I consoled him, I anointed him, I prayed for him."

The old chaplain's voice cracks. "I've seen about 75 kids on the threshold of eternity. That keeps me motivated, because I'm concerned about eternal life. These are our best kids. Freedom is taken for granted in this country, but they are the ones who make it possible for us to have freedom. They are our very best. They willingly offer themselves as a sacrifice for the rest of us. To me, being willing to sacrifice is at the heart of what it means to be a soldier."

And, he could have said but did not, a chaplain. **NR**

■ **POLITICS**

# Meet the Diaz-Balarts

**A couple of Castro's 'nephews'—in Congress.**

JAY NORDLINGER

THEY'RE called the "Cuban Kennedys," and the appellation is inevitable. The family is big, influential, and sort of glamorous. They were political leaders first in Cuba and then in Miami. The sons, in fact, are princes of Miami, although no scandals attach to them. In this sense they're not very Kennedyesque, which is just the way the family would want it. The Diaz-Balarts are strong Republicans.

Two of the boys are in Congress: Lincoln Diaz-Balart, elected in 1992, and Mario Diaz-Balart, elected just last November. Another son is José Diaz-Balart, a television anchorman. He used to work on the CBS morning show, and is now a star of Telemundo. The fourth son—although the firstborn, actually—is Rafael Diaz-Balart, an investment banker in Miami.

I visit the boys in Congress, meeting the two in Lincoln's office. (It's only right that Mario, the freshman and little brother, be forced to trek to the bigger brother's office.) I ask an easy, warm-puppies question: Are their parents proud of them? "Sure," answers Lincoln, "but they never put any pressure on us to have a political career. They never told us what they expected. They guided us by their example. A lot of the things we deeply believe in, we picked up from them."

In talking to the brothers, it's obvious that they're passionately, even quintessentially, American. And they're equally passionately Cuban, never forgetting—never forgetting the terror, depravity, and desperation in the homeland 90 miles away. Their father has said of his sons, "They're 100 percent American and 100 percent Cuban." As exemplified by the Diaz-Balarts, this is a formula that adds up.

### OUT OF CUBA

The Diaz-Balart story is well known in Miami, but little known outside that community. The brothers, and others, will tell you that that's typical of the Cuban story in general. An ancestor, Rafael Balart, fought and died in the Cuban war for independence. Since then, there have been a lot of Rafaels in the family. "Everybody's Rafael," says Mario Diaz-Balart. "We don't forget that history." The boys' grandfather was Rafael Diaz-Balart, who was a country lawyer, mayor of his town, and counsel to the United Fruit Company. Lincoln



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Diaz-Balart knows that everyone's supposed to gasp at the mention of United Fruit, "but they were very good in Cuba. I don't know about Central America, but, in Cuba, they paid their taxes, they built infrastructure—everyone wanted to work for United Fruit. They were an influence for good."

That grandfather named his first son Rafael Lincoln Diaz-Balart: This is the boys' father. The grandfather revered President Lincoln, and so bestowed that name on his son. The grandmother, as it happened, was a deep admirer of Ralph Waldo Emerson: so another boy in that family was Waldo. Rafael Lincoln Diaz-Balart rose to become an important politician in the Republic. He would be majority leader in the House of Representatives. But first he was a friend, comrade, and roommate of Fidel Castro. One fatal thing the boys' father did was introduce Castro to his sister Mirta, whom Castro married in 1948. They had one son, before divorcing in 1954. That boy, Fidelito, was sent to the Soviet Union to study and be communized.

**Last November, when Mario was elected, *National Journal* said that the new congressman's 'views on Cuba policy are likely to be colored by his family's experience.' *Colored.* You think?**

According to Lincoln Diaz-Balart, his mother always hated Castro, even when the young rabble-rouser was best friends with her husband. She never trusted Castro, and she was appalled at the way he treated Mirta, her sister-in-law. When Castro seized power, the Diaz-Balart family—which then numbered four—happened to be out of the country. How important was that to their survival? "Put it this way," says Mario Diaz-Balart, when I ask him: "If they hadn't been out of the country, you and I and Lincoln wouldn't be having this conversation right now." The Castroites burned and looted their home. Last November, when Mario was elected, *National Journal* said that the new congressman's "views on Cuba policy are likely to be colored by his family's experience." *Colored.* You think?

In the past, Castro has liked to say to visiting U.S. congressmen, "Give my best to my nephew, would you? He's in Congress, you know." Now he has two "nephews" in Congress. Lincoln says, "Castro likes to toy with us in that way. It's totally cynical. It's just part of his game. His visitors say, 'You've got a nephew in Congress?!' They're so impressed." The boys have no contact with their cousin, Fidelito. He was once out of favor with the regime, but is now back in, apparently. Lincoln says, "I don't wish ill on anybody—except on those who are running that place." Mario chimes in, "Look, Fidelito is one of the oppressors, he's part of that machine." Blood relative or not, "that's how we feel."

The boys' father, Raphael Lincoln Diaz-Balart, gave an extraordinary speech in the Cuban House in May 1955. Lincoln hands me a translation. The father wanted to explain his opposition to a law that amnestied Castro and his band. The law had just been passed and was apparently popular. The majority leader said, in part,

> Fidel Castro and his group have repeatedly declared, from their comfortable prison, that they will be leaving prison only in order to continue plotting new acts of violence and whatever it takes to achieve the total power they seek. They have refused to take part in any type of peaceful settlement, threatening both members of the government and members of the opposition who support electoral solutions to the country's problems.
>
> They do not want peace. They do not want a national solution. They do not want democracy, or elections, or fraternity. Fidel Castro and his group seek only one thing: power, and total power at that. And they want to achieve that power through violence, so that their total power will enable them to destroy every vestige of . . . law in Cuba, to institute the most cruel, most barbaric tyranny— . . . a totalitarian regime, a corrupt and murderous regime that would be difficult to overthrow for at least twenty years. This is because Fidel Castro is nothing more than a psychopathic fascist, who could choose to align himself with communism only because fascism was defeated in the Second World War.

He ended, "I believe that this amnesty—so imprudently adopted—will bring days, many days, of mourning, pain, bloodshed, and misery to the Cuban people, even though these very people do not see it that way now. I ask God that the majority of the people and the majority of my fellow representatives present here be the ones who are right. I ask God that I be the one who is mistaken—for Cuba's sake."

**GO-GETTERS**

In Lincoln Diaz-Balart's office are the tokens of his life and thought. There are photos of his illustrious family, of course, and of prominent political prisoners in Cuba. There are Lincoln memorabilia. There's an image of the Shroud of Turin. There are pictures of early Cuban heroes, such as José Martí. There are photos of Reagan, Nixon—and of Alvaro Uribe Vélez, the new president of Colombia, whose job is one of the hardest on earth. Lincoln arrived in Congress after a career as a legal-aid lawyer, assistant state attorney, and Florida legislator. He is, indeed, lawyerly, a nimble and forceful debater. He is a constant reader and inquirer. Mario Diaz-Balart is often described as more laid back—almost a surfer dude. (He scuba-dives, actually.) Mario gives an impression of Miami Cool, though he is a


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dedicated pol. Lincoln says, "He has much better people skills than I do."

Lincoln was born there, in 1954, and Mario here, in 1961. The younger brother left college to work for the mayor of Miami—and never went back. At 27, he was elected to the state house of representatives. At 31, he was elected to the state senate. As chairman of the ways and means committee, he was a ferocious budget-cutter. His nickname? "The Slasher." Employing his legislative virtuosity, he had a hand in drawing the district that would elect Lincoln to Congress. Years later, he had a hand in drawing the district that would elect . . . him. Most seem to think that his future in Washington is very bright. Mario was chosen to give a kind of pep talk to GOP senators about the Miguel Estrada judicial nomination: If you're Hispanic, you're supposed to be a liberal Democrat. The Diaz-Balarts are fervent Reaganites. They have naked contempt for the notion of race-as-destiny.

With Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the brothers compose the Big Three of Miami Cubans in Congress. A fourth Cuban-American, Robert Menendez, comes from New Jersey. "He's a partisan Democrat," says Lincoln, "but on Cuba we think exactly alike." The brothers are keen to be all-purpose American congressmen, and they are that, but they know they have a burden to keep an eye on Cuba. It's not a burden they reject or resent. "How can you do otherwise," asks Lincoln, "if you know what's going on?" They know the history of Cuba chapter-and-verse, and they know the names and particulars of political prisoners. Lincoln describes Castro's island as "a mixture of medieval feudalism and Al Capone-ism"—"with a touch of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* thrown in," adds Mario.

Like all Cuban-Americans, the Diaz-Balarts are disturbed by the persistent pro-Castroism among American elites, particularly in academia, the media, and Hollywood. It would be one thing if these elites merely ignored Cuba; but they weigh in actively for the regime. Castro plays the American press like a violin, the brothers note, giving the "eight-hour treatment," as Lincoln calls it, to Barbara Walters, Andrea Mitchell, and the like. "He doesn't give this treatment to just anyone," says Lincoln. "He has to suspect that you'll fall for it." And yet, the brothers insist, Americans in general still recognize Castro for what he is. "They know he's a tyrant," says Lincoln, "even though they've heard nothing but positive things about him for forty years."

The policies Lincoln and Mario favor are those usually described in our press as "hard-line." (That's not meant as a compliment.) And the press is full of stories alleging that the South Florida community is changing—that a new generation favors a softer, more accommodating line toward Cuba. The brothers both guffaw. "This story has been written, repeatedly, for years," says Mario. "And yet Lincoln, Ileana, and I are elected with 95 percent of the Cuban-American vote." The local media billed Mario's race last fall as "a referendum on U.S. policy toward Cuba." (His Democratic opponent advocated a softer line.) "Then when I won, big, it wasn't a referendum anymore!"

The Diaz-Balart brothers also do well among non-Cuban Hispanics, even though these Hispanics are often said to be hostile to the Cubans. "The Democrats try to play a game of divide-and-conquer," says Mario. But it has not triumphed in Greater Miami. Lincoln says that non-Cuban Hispanics are now as much a part of his political base as the Cubans. And he scores heavily among "Anglos."

In Congress, the Cubans aren't entirely lacking in Democratic allies. Lincoln cites some Jewish congressmen, such as New York's Eliot Engel and Gary Ackerman. They "get it," he says—understand what the Cubans are up against. (The Diaz-Balarts, in turn, are passionate supporters of Israel.) And then there's Rep. Tom Lantos, the Democrat from California who came to this country as a Hungarian refugee. Says Lincoln, "Lantos is practically the only one who has gone down to Havana and grasped everything. Unfortunately, most people who go down there don't have totalitarianism as a reference point in their lives. Lantos came back and said repression there is worse than in Ceausescu's Romania."

**FOLLOWING REAGAN—AND JEANE**

Both Diaz-Balart congressmen started out as Democrats, but switched parties in the 1980s. Why? Lincoln speaks essentially for both brothers: "Well, it was Ronald Reagan.

ISMAEL ROLDAN

*Mario and Lincoln Diaz-Balart*



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He made me a Republican, with his fight against communism, particularly in this hemisphere. The more I learn about him, the more I admire him. And Chris Dodd made me a Republican, too." Sen. Dodd was a Democrat who fought Reagan constantly on Latin America. "It's kind of ironic, but now I'm in Congress, battling Chris Dodd on some of these same issues. He doesn't know it, but he had a lot to do with my becoming a Republican." Lincoln cites another former Democrat, Jeane Kirkpatrick, as his "soulmate," a woman whose way of thinking and analyzing is exactly in line with his own.

The brothers are deeply admiring of the current president. Lincoln avers that he's practically as good as Reagan! They're also admirers of the president's brother, the governor of Florida. "Jeb Bush is beyond smart," Lincoln says. "He's one of the smartest people I've ever known. You can talk big picture with him, you can talk about budget details—it doesn't matter. Jeb's on top of everything." Besides which, his Spanish is "excellent—fluent." (The governor's wife is Mexican.)

As for George W., Lincoln says, "I like his instincts. When a problem reaches his desk, he decides it in the correct manner." Whether information reaches his desk, however, is another matter. Lincoln says that vital information about Cuba—including Castro's role in international terrorism—seems not to make its way up the chain. Nor is he happy with the administration's Latin America policy overall. "I don't think that Secretary Powell has been sufficiently in tune with what's going on" in the region, he says. The situation in Venezuela is deteriorating, with Hugo Chavez having discarded "his democratic legitimacy." Colombia "needs more help, more attention, more emphasis." Granted, there's a mammoth war on terrorism in progress, plus nuclear-armed North Korea. "But there's a strange inertia in our country that leads to the ignoring of our own hemisphere."

When all is said and done, what fires the Diaz-Balarts is freedom. They can get as exercised about China as they do about Cuba. "I feel almost embarrassed for the human race that we just sit here and accept regimes like that," says Lincoln. He decries the fact that the Cubans have so few supporters and defenders on the world scene—Vaclav Havel is often a lonely voice.

And what about the post-Castro period—Liberation Day and after? Will there be a Diaz-Balart migration in reverse? Lincoln allows that "I'm going to know things that are useful. I often think, 'Gosh, when there's finally a parliament again, there should be a rules committee.' I have a duty to be generous with what I know." But leadership should be taken by the dissidents, he says—as in the former Czechoslovakia, as in Poland. Take the imprisoned and unfathomably heroic Oscar Elías Biscet: "I know what it means for someone like Dr. Biscet, who could be in exile, who could have become a physician in Miami, to have voluntarily chosen to take a stand that would lead him to a dungeon. So, if there's any justice in the world, the dissidents, the oppositionists, the democrats—the ones who have suffered and bled and risked everything—will be the ones in the lead."

Meanwhile, the Cuban Kennedys will cut a swath through Miami. And Washington. **NR**

■ **THE EARTH**

# Blue Is True

## What the color of environmentalism should be

MICHAEL NOVAK

If you care about the environment, your symbolic color should be not green but blue. First of all, over two-thirds of the planet's surface is blue, and represents a major environmental challenge: Even with all that water, over a billion people still lack clean water to drink. Second, blue has a political meaning. Where people are poor, environmental conditions tend to be abysmal; and if the 20th century proved anything, it was that the best way to end poverty isn't red—the color of socialism—but blue, the color of liberty, personal initiative, and enterprise.

"Blue Environmentalism" is the way we should build on the stunning success of the environmental movement of the past 30 years. We should begin by frankly acknowledging those successes. The rhetorical outlook of some environmentalists functions like blinders on a dray horse: It prevents them from looking anywhere but straight ahead. As a result, the public is seldom encouraged to look back to see how much progress was made in improving the environment during the 20th century, and especially after the first Earth Day in 1970.

### A CLEANER AMERICA

Some of the most important changes in man's environment are in fact rarely discussed as "environmental issues." Among these are (1) the progress of hygiene, which led in the early 20th century to the sanitation movement for the removal of human wastes; (2) the replacement of the horse by the automobile, which removed the excrement of 3.4 million horses from urban streets; and (3) the advent of natural gas and electricity, which replaced age-old methods of burning wood and fossil fuels in thousands of stoves and open fireplaces in crowded urban dwellings.

These developments created a vastly cleaner America. Consider, for example, the saga of the American horse. In 1900, there were 20.4 million horses in the U.S.; these horses had a combined transport capacity that equaled three-quarters of the carrying capacity of all U.S. railroads. But there were problems: The average horse required about 39 pounds of food per day, or five tons per year; to grow that food removed some 25 percent of all U.S. farmland, or 93 million acres, from all other agricultural use; and each horse produced about 12,000 pounds of manure and 400 gallons of urine per year—

**Mr. Novak is director of social and political studies at the American Enterprise Institute. This article is adapted from a lecture delivered to leaders of the European center-right, in Venice, Italy, on November 22, 2002.**



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with particularly toxic results in congested urban areas. The change in technology from horse to automobile was a great blessing for healthfulness and cleanliness, and it salvaged more than 90 million acres of good land for other productive uses.

In America over the past century, about 500 million acres have reverted to woodland. From an airplane, the stretch of New England from Albany to Boston seems blanketed by forests from one downtown to another, returned almost to its wooded aspect in 1600. One New York State wildlife biologist has been quoted as saying: "Most Easterners don't realize it, but they live in a huge forest." Wildlife species once thought endangered have been prospering. Deer have increased to 20 million, more than in George Washington's day; black bears number 150,000, and elk over 700,000. In a word, the fauna are flourishing as seldom before, even in the parts of America usually thought to be the most urban and densely populated.

Nor should we ignore the immense positive effects the environmental movement has had since 1970. Clean-air legislation went into effect in 1955 and was amended several times, including in 1970—there were not any politicians who were willing to be in favor of *dirty* air—and from 1976 until 1999, a period of only 23 years, the six types of air pollution proscribed and closely monitored by the Environmental Protection Agency were brought down quite sharply. Lead pollution, for example, was reduced by 97 percent; sulfur dioxide by 65 percent; and carbon monoxide by 68 percent. The Pacific Research Institute has collected other data from the EPA regarding air quality and toxic chemicals that exemplify similar progress.

All this seems startling, because the press seldom reports it. Moreover, environmental activists of the apocalyptic type never report it, and even get angry if anyone else does.

### AND NOT A DROP TO DRINK

Emboldened by this realistic assessment of the progress we've made, we should tackle the specific key issue I mentioned at the beginning: clean drinking water. *There are 1.1 billion persons in the world who don't have it.* Helping them is not a speculative enterprise like preventing "global warming"; it's a serious and urgent task.

The problem afflicts the poorest continents worst of all. In North America, 100 percent of the population has a clean water supply; in Europe, it's 96 percent. In Africa, by contrast, only 62 percent—of a population of more than three-quarters of a billion people—have clean running water. In Asia, it's 81 percent; but because that continent is the most populous, it has the largest number of people affected—about 700 million.

Important progress was made on this between 1990 and 2000. Even though world population increased by nearly 800 million during that decade, still, both in Asia and in Africa, the percentage of the population that had access to clean water jumped by five percentage points. Actually, 816 million people worldwide gained new access to water during that brief period (about 224,000 *per day* for ten years). That is a great achievement, and should be duly noted. Such steady, dramatic progress in only ten years makes it reasonable to plan for even more substantial gains in this decade and the next.

Africa should be the top priority. Given that continent's unusually acute internal variations in water supply, its water system needs to be among the best designed in the world; instead, it is the most neglected in the world. A constant cycle of civil wars, maladministration by fragile governments and kleptocracies, and poorly managed financial resources have penalized Africa's peoples severely. This *political* deficit prevents Africa from enjoying the economic progress of most of the rest of the world—notably that of Asia, which not long ago was even poorer than Africa but has now leapt ahead of it.

None of the technical difficulties facing the effort to supply Africa with water presents challenges that have not been conquered on other continents. But the political, cultural, and economic obstacles are more serious. By and large, Africa has become accustomed to subsidized and/or non-cost water; at the same time, no one is obliged to pay for polluting existing streams of water—neither farmers whose agricultural runoff damages water use downstream, nor industrial polluters, nor cities and villages that pour untreated effluents into the water supply. There are no incentives to save and protect clean water. As a result, water is too often treated irresponsibly.

There need to be policies that would impose both incentives and costs to encourage more responsible use. For instance, if citizens in certain regions were given water coupons that entitled them to an adequate personal share of free water per year, and had to pay modest sums for any additional use, they would for the first time face incentives to use water responsibly—or else pay for it. In a similar spirit, costs should be imposed on polluters, whether industrial or governmental or familial, in proportion to their spillage of untreated materials into sources of supply for others. Also, financial or other rewards should be offered to any entities that build and maintain treatment facilities.

In Asia, the water problem affects China most of all. Shortages are becoming acute, with worse to come; and the country's governmental structures aren't equipped to cope with the issue. But China is rapidly growing in wealth, and has a profusion of technical talent; for this reason, we can reasonably count on the Chinese to solve their own water crisis. (We would, of course, provide any necessary help and advice at their request.)

Bringing water to all the world's people will require imagination and enterprise, capital and high skills in organization. The institutions best equipped to bring these requisites to the table are in the corporate business sector. In some places, public utilities may be best for supplying water, if they can be both efficiently run and kept free of corruption; in other places, well-regulated private companies will be best; and in still others, public-private partnerships. But in all cases, Blue Environmentalism encourages the highest possible level of practicality, and private enterprise.

### FREEDOM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

And that principle doesn't apply just to the clean-water issue; it has lessons across the environmental spectrum. Blue Environmentalism is based on the crucial insight that nature is meant for man, not man for nature. Human beings are made by their unique endowment of liberty to be provident



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over their own destiny. One important way to exercise this providence is to take care not to foul our habitat. Henry Adams saw that science and technology were the masculine "Dynamo" of our progress—but he intuited that they needed to be balanced by a feminine nurturing of nature, which nurturing he expressed in the symbol of the "Virgin."

There is now a battle under way in Western culture as to the precise meaning of the symbol of the Virgin. The pristine mountains, waterfalls, lakes, forests, and rivers have come to be seen, in and of themselves, as Virgin surrogates. Nature is envisioned as a sublime, purer order that rebukes the order man has made. The fact that nature has through most of history exerted cruel and killing dominion over man has been repressed; Nature is now viewed, implausibly, as simply beneficent. This is the great psychic drama being played out in the modern environmental movement. Mythic elements of great power are involved in it. Those who choose to proceed with critical intellect intact must pay due respect to realities of that kind: The underlying arguments are not about policy only, but about quasi-religious visions of the pure, the good, and the nurturing.

The first guiding principle of Blue Environmentalism, therefore, needs to be *realism*. This means we need to gain the most accurate, non-politicized, and independent view of the hard reality of environmental trends that is possible, and to promote the development of expert techniques to cope with them. To the neo-pagan deification of nature, we must respond by proposing courses of action that actually promote the well-being of the environment in measurable ways, within defined limits of time.

The second guiding principle must be *liberty*. While some environmentalists of the past have preferred to castigate and punish, Blue Environmentalists should choose a method of greater proven effectiveness: creating markets in which both positive and negative incentives function well, in the interest of the environment as well as that of individuals. When human beings make free choices, they normally calculate the costs and benefits of their actions fairly carefully, in order not to suffer the consequences of not doing so. Therefore, these costs and benefits should be so aligned as to promote the common good, while respecting free choice. By helping to promote the common good, individual citizens will benefit directly: For example, incentives paid to homeowners to improve energy efficiency at home save the whole community energy use, and simultaneously reduce annual costs for the individual homeowners. The ideal outcome occurs when the personal good overlaps with the common good; as much as possible, policy ought to aim at that outcome.

The third and final guiding principle is that we must focus on *raising up the poor*. The world's worst pollution is in the poorest countries; it arises from primitive methods of heating and cooling, inadequate sanitation systems, and other causes rooted explicitly in poverty. In August 2002, a huge brown cloud gathered over Asia—the result, experts said, of an air inversion fed by fumes from burning peat, firewood, and other primitive materials in millions of homes and kitchens. Deforestation and desertification are other consequences of reliance on traditional methods of heating. All of this should make poverty a core environmental issue.

Our deepest motivation for trying to help the poor gain a more becoming affluence is for their own liberation and basic dignity—so that they might become all that God has given them the potential to be. Blue Environmentalists hold that the best way to help the poor of the distressed continents rise out of poverty is the way that has been working spectacularly in India and China during the past 20 years. It is to recognize the strict relation of the right to private property to the right to personal economic initiative, and to take the necessary political and institutional steps to give these basic rights realistic support in practice.

**The first guiding principle of Blue Environmentalism needs to be *realism*.**

It is fundamental, for example, that the right to enterprise not be criminalized—yet most entrepreneurs in Peru and many other Latin countries are forced to work as *informales* or *illegales*. The right to incorporate a small business follows from the right of association. The state has a right to regulate such registration, and may charge a small sum to cover its expenses; but such registration must be cheap and quick. In addition, it is crucial that a large supply of micro-loans be made available for poor persons who have promising business plans. New institutions that specialize in making such loans, as well as in providing technical support to help borrowers succeed, will need to be started from scratch, since most existing banks in Third World nations lend little or nothing to the poor. Borrowing is the mother's milk of infant businesses, since poor people have no pre-existing capital with which to launch, or to expand, their businesses. All they have are their ideas, their sweat, and their good habits; but since these are the main cause of the wealth of nations, that is quite enough to justify establishing institutions that will promote them.

Blue Environmentalism, therefore, stands for the spreading of those institutions of empowerment that promote private property and creativity. It is not the natural endowment God gave the poor that is currently at fault, but the inadequacy of political systems and social institutions that fail to nurture and support it. Liberty releases the eminently realizable hope of bringing every woman, man, and child into the circle of universal affluence, which this planet has been fashioned to support. The goods of the earth have been given a universal destination, and that destination is the freeing of everyone on earth from the prison of poverty.

Freedom, too, has its own ecology. Blue Environmentalism cherishes the ecology of liberty. **NR**


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# the long view

ROB LONG

## COURT-ORDERED MEDIATION IN THE MATTER:

*Satan (Plaintiff)*
*vs.*
*Jacques Chirac (Defendant)*
*for*
*Breach of Contract (Verbal)*

Transcript

April 14, 2007

**PRESENT:** M. Chirac and his counsel, Mr. Johnnie Cochran; Judge Blix (ret.); Satan (serving as his own counsel)

From page 7:

**JUDGE BLIX:** . . . and at what point did the first substantial meeting occur between the two of you?
**SATAN:** Oh, um, I'd have to check my notes. I know it was before the war. I forget which one. I've been involved in so many. I'm old, you know. You get old, you forget things.
**MR. COCHRAN:** Objection, Your Honor! We have a right to know which war! This is becoming a farce!
**JUDGE BLIX:** Mr. Cochran, again, I must remind you that this is not a court of law. It is a mediation session ordered by the European Union Court of Trade and Commerce to ascertain whether or not the contract between M. Chirac and Satan—
**MR. COCHRAN:** Alleged contract! Please, Your Honor!
**JUDGE BLIX:** I must insist that you cease these interruptions.
**MR. COCHRAN:** I'm sorry, sir. It's just that I get very emotional when defending my clients.
**JUDGE BLIX:** Continue, please, Satan.
**SATAN:** Well, I'm not sure which war, okay? I'm looking through my notes here, but it's hard because I just switched over to Mac and some of them are still on the server somehow and . . .
**MR. COCHRAN:** Motion for dismissal!
**JUDGE BLIX:** Mr. Cochran, please. Satan, please continue.
**SATAN:** Well, I don't know where I was, now. I get so turned around dealing with this guy.
**JUDGE BLIX:** Your first meeting?
**SATAN:** Right. Right. It was before the war.
**JUDGE BLIX:** Which war?
**SATAN:** The war the French refused to fight in.
**JUDGE BLIX:** Could you be more specific?
**SATAN:** The war they sat on the sidelines of.
**JUDGE BLIX:** Could you be more specific?
**SATAN:** The one where they basically sided with the enemy.
**JUDGE BLIX:** Could you be more specific?

From page 11:

**SATAN:** . . . winning reelection to the French presidency—my work . . . watering down U.N. Resolution 1441—my work . . . keeping the invasion of the Ivory Coast quiet—my work . . . disrupting NATO and weakening the smaller EU candidate countries—my work . . . my work, my work, my work! You think any of that would have happened without me? Gimme a break.
**M. CHIRAC:** It was French influence that—
**SATAN:** Oh please. Oh please!
**M. CHIRAC:** . . . and world opinion based on the superiority of French—
**SATAN:** I think I'd know my own work.
**M. CHIRAC:** . . . prestige of French military sophistication and . . .
**SATAN:** I did it all, judge. All of it! And now he reneges! I mean, I'm Satan for chrissakes.
**M. CHIRAC:** . . . and our rational arguments prevailed . . .
[sounds of scuffle]

From page 15:

**M. CHIRAC:** . . . at which point, I turned to my lover and said to her, "The most absurdist surreality has occurred, *ma chérie*. The devil himself has appeared to me to offer the most Faustian of bargains." And she and I laughed at the philosophical illogic of it. Later, when I shared the story with my wife, she, too, found it ludicrous. And so I categorically reject the suggestion that he and I had any form of bargain. We met, yes. We dined, of course. But the meeting came to naught.
**MR. COCHRAN:** It came to naught. It came to naught. And what, sir, if it's not too painful to recall—
**M. CHIRAC:** No, no. I'm quite happy to set the record straight.
**MR. COCHRAN:** What, then, sir, was the bargain that the devil offered?
**M. CHIRAC:** He promised to make certain political problems disappear in exchange for what he called my "immortal soul."
**MR. COCHRAN:** And what was your reply?
**M. CHIRAC:** I shrugged and continued enjoying my *reblochon*.
**SATAN:** Not true! Not freakin' true!
**MR. COCHRAN:** Sir! Please!
**SATAN:** This is freakin' unbelievable! Just un-freakin'-believable!
**JUDGE BLIX:** Order!
**SATAN:** You arrogant jerk! [Meaning M. Chirac.] You were up to your neck in political scandal. They had you nailed, man. Nailed! They had you on bribery charges, on kickbacks, on a secret slush fund—
**M. CHIRAC:** This is unacceptably surreal. This is something out of Ionesco.
**JUDGE BLIX:** Gentlemen!
**MR. COCHRAN:** I move to call a mistrial, Your Honor!
**JUDGE BLIX:** Gentlemen, please!
**SATAN:** You made a promise! This is a business based on trust!
**M. CHIRAC:** I recall nothing of the kind.
**SATAN:** That's it! That's it!
**JUDGE BLIX:** Satan, please sit down.
**MR. COCHRAN:** Judge, I request a mistrial. Satan is threatening my client with his pitchfork.
**M. CHIRAC:** Ouch!
[sounds of scuffle; smell of brimstone]



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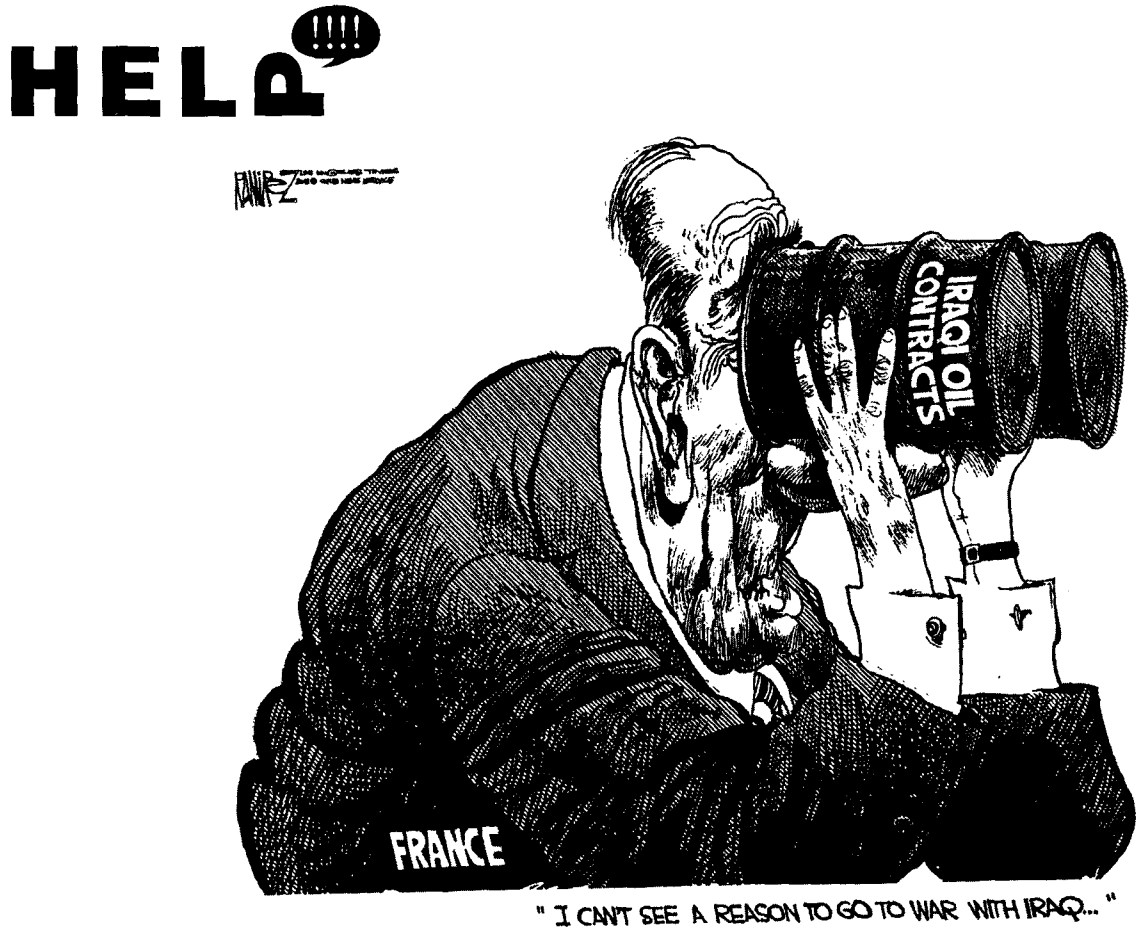


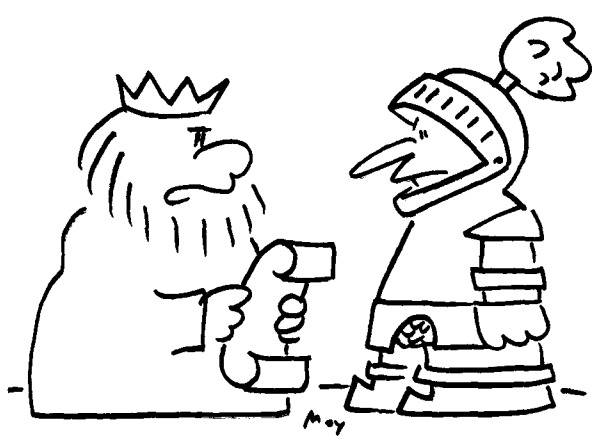

*"I've finally achieved full employment!—*
*Except, of course, for my brother-in-law."*

## What France Requires

*The wines and cheeses aren't enough,*
*Nor are the chorines in the buff*
*Sufficient to assuage the pain;*
*As Charles de Gaulle tried to explain*
*To weary Winston, "To be France,*
*She must be mistress of the dance"—*
*A tiresome requirement*
*That leaves tout Europe looking spent.*

—W. H. von Dreele



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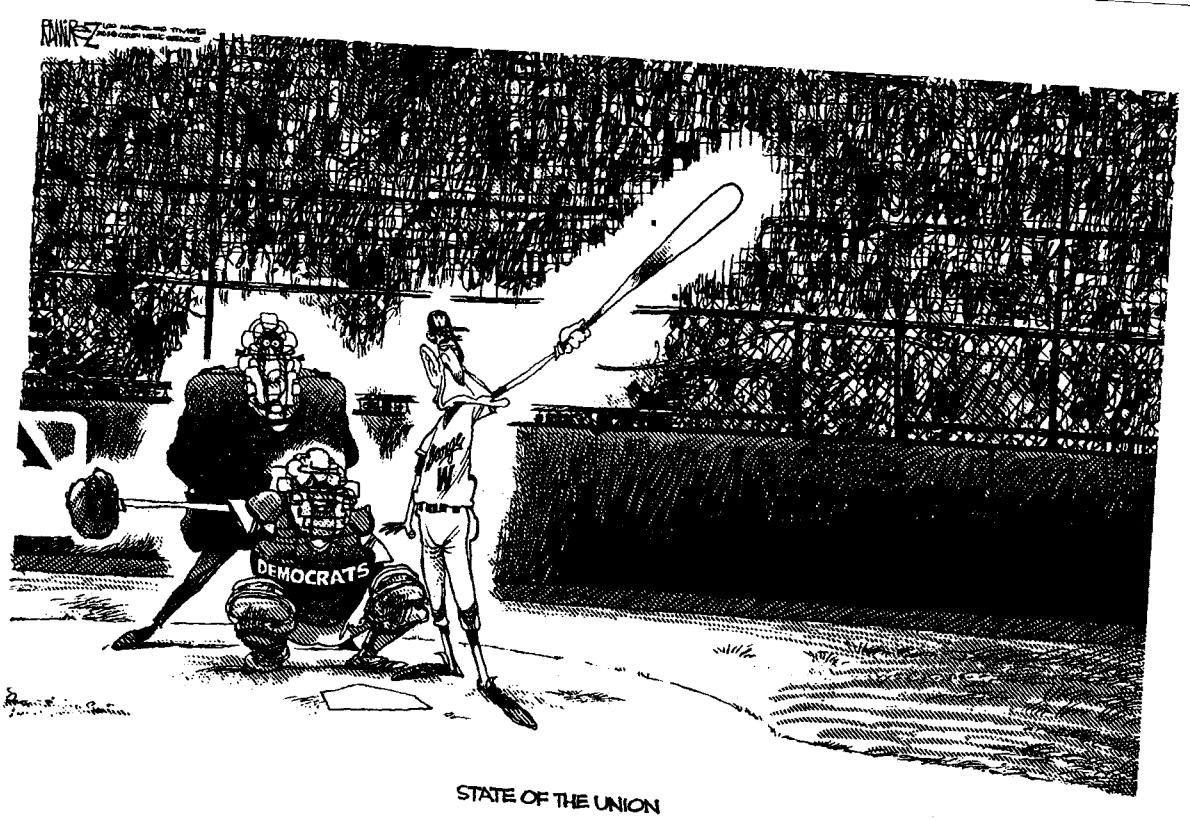


STATE OF THE UNION



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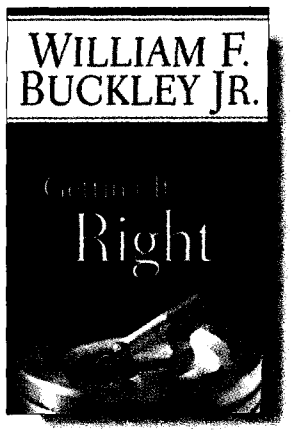
# How the Right Was Won




*Getting It Right*,
by William F. Buckley Jr.
(Regnery, 311 pp., $24.95)

AUSTIN W. BRAMWELL

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR. is a controversialist with the soul of a peacemaker. In reading his last five novels—*The Redhunter*, *Spytime*, *Elvis in the Morning*, *Nuremberg: The Reckoning*, and, now, *Getting It Right*—one almost forgets that their author made a career of rupturing so many Establishment spleens. Not only do they collectively paint one of the most loving recent portraits of America, they even show the author reconciling himself to his erstwhile enemies—the opponents of Senator McCarthy in *Redhunter*, rock-'n'-roll music in *Elvis* (against which this reviewer wishes he had held out longer), and, in *Getting It Right*, John Birch Society founder Robert Welch and *Atlas Shrugged* author Ayn Rand.

**Mr. Bramwell is a third-year student at Harvard Law School.**

Well, almost. Both Welch and Rand gave momentum to the centrifugal forces threatening in the early 1960s to pull the conservative movement apart. Rand, a Russian émigré, decocted free-market ideology until any moral sentiment had evaporated from the self-interest. Welch, a successful businessman, explained all the vicissitudes of world events according to the axiom that the Communist conspiracy lay behind them. Both demanded fealty from their followers; both put themselves at loggerheads with Buckley's NATIONAL REVIEW.

In that sense, and with characteristic cheek, *Getting It Right*'s real protagonist is the author himself, and one happily roots for him throughout. The story begins with Woodroe Raynor, a Mormon from Utah who upon finishing Princeton becomes a spokesman for the John Birch Society. Along the way he meets comely Leonora Goldstein, the daughter of Jewish immigrants, who earns a job doing paperwork for Ayn Rand after reading *Atlas Shrugged* four times. Becoming disenchanted with their respective idols, they fall out of favor with Welch and Rand, fall in with the NATIONAL REVIEW crowd, and also fall in love, thereby joining anti-Communism and libertarianism in romance just as NR did in politics.

Interest in the genesis of conservatism in America has grown in recent years, even among liberals—the bibliography lists some of the most influential texts—but *Getting It Right* is surely the most entertaining account of that genesis. All the giants of conservatism's heroic age are here: Barry Goldwater, sporting dungarees and an Aztec belt; Frank Meyer, abusing the telephone lines at midnight; Murray Rothbard, deducing the charisma of anarchism, proving the superiority of anarchism; L. Brent Bozell, furtively ghostwriting *Conscience of a Conservative*; Harry Jaffa, penning Goldwater's line "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice . . ."; not to mention Welch and Rand themselves.

Buckley has an exceptional ability to empathize with the figures he depicts. He manages to capture Rand's "Objectivist" idiom nearly perfectly: She and her acolytes speak of "the primacy of reason" and of the "mysticism of the mind," and one young Objectivist hangs a photo of the Pill in her living room. ("Why have a photograph of the Statue of Liberty?" she asks rhetorically.) There are even historical figures constructed without materials furnished from personal acquaintance: JFK and Earl Warren come memorably to life.

As a work of history, *Getting It Right* nicely illustrates historian George Nash's observation that modern American conservatism wore, in various degrees, libertarian, anti-Communist, and traditionalist guise not without some degree of discomfort. In the early Sixties the former two were running amok in the persons of Rand and Welch. To complete the triune symmetry, *Getting It Right* tells the story of Revilo Oliver, a brilliant philologist who could write in any of twelve ancient languages without typographical error but who later in life formulated an anti-Semitic blood-and-soil nationalism so febrile as even to reject Christianity. His work is a hideous testament to genius gone mad.

Rand, Welch, and their followers make easy targets for ridicule; *Getting It Right* never descends into lampoon. The novel shows the virtues that caused their success as much as the vices that precipitated their undoing. For Leonora, Ayn Rand had given philosophic voice to the reasons that her parents had uprooted their family to come to a land of boundless opportunity—Rand's distaste for surnames redolent of Judaism notwithstanding. (Florence King has observed that in the Randian imagination those heroic individuals must all be WASPs.) For Woodroe, Robert Welch had fearlessly analyzed the Communist conspiracy Woodroe had witnessed firsthand as a missionary in Eastern Europe.

Finally, however, Welch's and Rand's exaggerated sensitivity to *lèse-majesté* alienated both Leonora and Woodroe, and most of their other followers as

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well.* Each would rather have devoured his progeny than seen them grow into independence.

To winnow the kookiness out of right-wing politics required not just philosophic moderation but a great deal of tactical dexterity. One cannot help thinking, after learning from *Getting It Right* how some libertarians received Whittaker Chambers's famous review of *Atlas Shrugged*, that—whatever the faults in Rand's *magnum opus*—his attack was somewhat premature. Chambers, for whom history compelled a stark choice between God and man, freedom and tyranny, civilization and barbarism, perhaps did not know quite what to make of Rand, as fierce an atheist as an anti-Communist. He was closer to the truth when he described *Atlas Shrugged* as a "remarkably silly book" than when he accused it of uttering the subtextual command, "To a gas chamber—go!" A somewhat milder denunciation might have made libertarians less fractious constituents of the conservative movement.

On the other hand, *Getting It Right* shows that NATIONAL REVIEW handled the John Birch Society deftly. To blast the Birchers prematurely would have risked alienating anti-Communist patriots; to do so too late would have risked discrediting the entire movement. NATIONAL REVIEW dissevered the JBS from conservatism just as the moment was ripe; as proof, Welch's legion of followers joined the mainstream conservative fold as soon as the choice was presented to them.

**Buckley delves into bitter controversies, and leaves one feeling confident in America's goodness.**

Despite the early victories of the conservative movement, *Getting It Right* nonetheless never encourages the conceit that the wisdom of its leaders made those successes inevitable. If JFK's assassin—as nearly everyone assumed at the time—had leaned right rather than left, Goldwater would probably never have won the GOP nomination for president. Readers will share Leonora's relief when she exclaims, after learning of Lee Harvey Oswald's obsession with the Soviets, "My God! It was one of them."

Another historical accident, unflinchingly explored in this novel, is the coincidence of opposition to the growing power of the federal government and opposition to the civil rights movement. However unfairly, many people to this day cannot listen to an argument for federalism or judicial restraint without hearing a defense of segregation.

Salting the narrative throughout is the urbane wit of which Buckley remains the undisputed master when engaged in this mode. Sly allusions to Buckley's previous novels—one of them involving "the sovereign bedroom of the queen of England"—abound. The instinct for *le*

*Rand's following limps along. Welch's John Birch Society is a faint Xerox copy of the original, mortally hurt by the end of the Soviet Union.


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*mot juste*—the 1964 Republican National Convention finds the Goldwater loyalists "triumphing over morganatic contenders with impure bloodlines"—never falters. Most pleasantly of all for the reader, *Getting It Right* shows again the author's knack for engaging, straightforward plotting. This is a book that does not leave one feeling guilty for having finished it in a single sitting.

If the reader can have one complaint about the book, it is that we never quite see the qualities that made Ayn Rand, when all is said and done, such an enduringly popular writer. She did produce some quite novel and interesting insights. Her essay on why a rational woman would never want to be president, for example, shows as keen an understanding of romantic love as one will find. If it will not ever find its place beside Plato's *Symposium*, it nonetheless remains a provocative read.

In the end, however, the most rewarding feature of *Getting It Right* is not its intellectual or historical insights, or even its wit, but rather the author's unclouded generosity of spirit. Buckley delves into the bitterest controversies in recent American history—the career of Joe McCarthy in *The Redhunter*, Sixties-era upheaval in *Elvis in the Morning*, the civil rights movement in *Getting It Right*—and leaves one feeling more confidence than ever that America is a good country and Americans a good people. In Willmoore Kendall's phrase, they carried the Western tradition in their hips.

Perhaps future biographers and critics will refer to *Getting It Right* and its four predecessors as the "America Novels" of William F. Buckley Jr. They lend themselves to such a reading, each depicting a nation struggling with itself in the Cold War; each alludes to the others (Elvis and McCarthy appear several times in *Getting It Right*); and, most importantly, they form together a testament to one American's love for his country. As Leonora's mother tells her, the "biggest thing that's happened in your life" is "that you were born in America." The sentiment is pure Americana, but one senses that the author shares it. We hope that *Getting It Right* will merely add to, and not complete, the series. **NR**

# Tight Little Island

*This Is Cuba: An Outlaw Culture Survives*, by Ben Corbett (Westview, 304 pp., $26)

MARK FALCOFF

THE debate over Cuban policy in the United States has lately undergone some strange mutations. Many conservatives and libertarians—as well as Republican members of Congress from farm states—have decided it is time to lift the 40-year trade embargo and "engage" with the Castro regime. Meanwhile, a small but apparently growing cohort of people on the left have made the remarkable (for them) discovery that Cuba is a dysfunctional dictatorship that is destroying an entire country and people. Two cases in point are Ann Louise Bardach's *Cuba Confidential* and Isadora Tattlin's *Cuba Diaries*. Now comes Ben Corbett, a thirtysomething countercultural journalist out of Colorado, who spent three years going back and forth, befriending Cubans from all walks of life and listening to their stories. This book tells us what he learned, and it isn't a pretty picture.

**As one embittered Cuban tells Corbett, 'Nobody is allowed to make any money here. If you do, you're stealing from them. They want every single dollar for themselves.'**

Let it be said immediately that *This Is Cuba* is quite simply the best, the most complete, and the most devastating portrait of that unfortunate country to be found in any language. That the author is writing from the left only adds an edge to his account. In another age, he would probably be called a Trotskyist; while he suffers from some of the same ideological delusions as members of that sect, he also displays some of their characteristic strengths, particularly their penchant for hard data, their fierce political independence, and their determination to hold a Stalinist regime up against its own stated values and goals.

In spite of the embargo, quite a few Americans travel to Cuba nowadays—roughly 120,000 a year. The majority are Cuban-Americans who are permitted under U.S. law to visit their families once a year, but in fact another loophole makes it possible for lawmakers, journalists, scholars, celebrities, and others to visit the island. Still others visit the island illegally, going through third countries (Cuban officials are obliging and do not stamp their passports). Except for Cuban-Americans visiting their families, very few of these U.S.-based visitors ever get to see the real Cuba. This book gives us an intimate glimpse of what they are missing. Ben Corbett's friends include students, working families, prostitutes, drug dealers, dissidents, and diehard members of the Communist party. The one thing they have in common is that they are suffering from a lack of the basic necessities of life, because the regime has decided that even the smallest degree of economic freedom threatens the very existence of the regime. "Most Cubans," he writes in a phrase that virtually summarizes the entire book, "spend their time worrying

**Mr. Falcoff is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His book Cuba the Morning After: Normalization and Its Discontents will be published by the AEI Press in June.**


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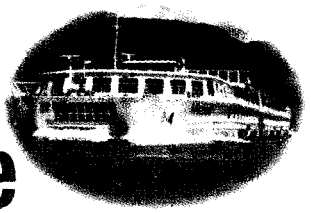

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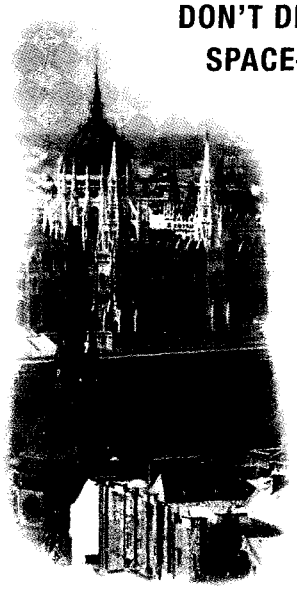

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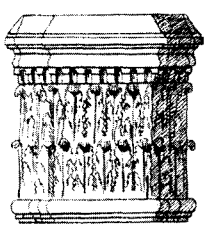
about the next meal. They are forced to break laws to eat, ironically sacrificing their personal dignity to preserve the dignity of the Revolutionary victory which is slated to occur sometime in the nebulous future."

Since the end of the Cuban-Soviet alliance in 1991 much misleading information has been reported in the world press about Castro's economic "reforms." Corbett is not fooled. "When the economy bottoms out," he writes, Castro "decentralizes, loosens the leash on the people, and allows them to engage in free enterprise. The renewed activity, in turn, stimulates the economy. But once the economy is reinvigorated, he tightens the leash, recentralizes power, and creates new restrictions." Corbett explains how many home-restaurants (legalized in 1994) have been put out of business for no good reason by officious inspectors, and families have been forced to send their daughters to live with their boyfriends so that they can take in foreign visitors (always living in fear that this modest concession will be withdrawn at any minute). The one widespread form of self-employment that seems likely to survive is prostitution, both male and female, which in Corbett's reckoning accounts for roughly a fifth of the country's tourist revenue (and, I adjudge, probably half its receipts from visitors from Latin America, Spain, and Italy).

Though forced to legalize the U.S. dollar in 1993, the regime has nonetheless found a way of turning the change to its advantage by setting up special stores that sell products normally unavailable to ordinary Cubans. Those lucky enough to receive dollar remittances from relatives abroad can now gain access to these palaces of plenty, but at a stunning price. The markup is anywhere from 100 to 300 percent higher than it would be in the neighboring Dominican Republic, Mexico, or Haiti. As one embittered Cuban tells Corbett, "Nobody is allowed to make any money here. If you do, you're stealing from them. They want every single dollar for themselves." Substitute the word "have" for "make," and you capture the very essence of socialism, Cuban or otherwise.



Nor is Corbett particularly impressed with Cuba's perverted labor code, which requires foreign investors to hire their employees from a state agency, and turn over their entire salary to the government—which in turn disburses roughly 10 percent to the worker. When I was in Cuba last year with a group of American public figures, we were told ad nauseam that this system was perfectly all right, because (a) it was nobody's business but Cuba's, (b) the foreign investors saw nothing wrong with it, and (c) the 90 percent the government collected was used for *prestaciones sociales*—e.g., free education, free health services, and extremely low-cost telephone services and utilities for the vast majority of Cubans not fortunate enough to work for a mixed venture. But, as Corbett points out, a Cuban's monthly electric bill—roughly 15 U.S. cents—is actually "outrageously expensive" in a society where the average income is between $10 and $20 a month. More to the point, there is nothing in the ration stores, no medicine in the popular clinics, no books or pencils in the schools. It is not to be assumed that every one of the 90 cents of each dollar earned by the worker is automatically transferred to social services, without the state security services, the military, and other worthies taking their own substantial cut.

**In Cuba the average income is between $10 and $20 a month, and there is nothing in the ration stores.**

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book deals with how Cubans try to make sense of all this. The most common phrase they use is *"no es fácil"*—"it's not easy." Life is a constant struggle. Many await Castro's death. Others, perhaps the majority, are waiting for the embargo to be lifted (referred to in the jargon of the regime as the impending and inevitable *victoria*—or victory—of the Revolution), laboring under the delusion that this alone will cause milk and honey to flow. Still others are not waiting at all. They are either leaving, or planning to leave. Or they have taken matters in their own hands, like the prostitute who told Corbett: "I am not waiting around for the victory to live the good life. I like nice things, good clothes, good food, not the dog food they sell at the *bodega* or the cheap clothes on the street."

Perhaps most surprising in Corbett's account is the number of people who still believe in Castro's vision—to the extent that they are waiting for him to pull a rabbit out of the hat and solve all of their problems. Or they take refuge in self-pity and martyrdom. (One such told Corbett, "We will be remembered in history as a model society of a fair and just world of the future.") Most, however, have simply lost interest in the revolutionary project, and taken refuge in a private universe of alienation and bitterness. Corbett thinks that Castro realizes that "he has lost his people." He recommends, somewhat quixotically, that the dictator face up to the facts "rather than foster the role of victim merely to remain in power." We'll see about that.

This book is so good that one hesitates to take issue with the author on points of fact. Nonetheless, he has many things wrong. Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque is not "more powerful than Castro himself," nor is he an economic genius, nor for that matter a genius of any other kind. (He is actually nothing more than a smartass toady loudmouth.) Corbett also seems strangely ignorant of the facts about pre-Castro Cuba. While it is true that many Cubans now have to sell their flesh to survive, this was far from the case in 1959—as he seems to think. Even under the dictator Fulgencio Batista, Cuba had the third highest standard of living in Latin America, indeed higher than many southern European countries. Nor can the U.S. trade embargo, which leaks like a sieve, be ranked along with the collapse of the Soviet Union or the systemic failure of socialism as one of the primary causes of Cuban poverty. Nonetheless, Corbett has performed a splendid service for his Cuban friends. He has allowed them to speak for themselves—in many cases, surely, for the first time. **NR**



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# Do They Make the Man?

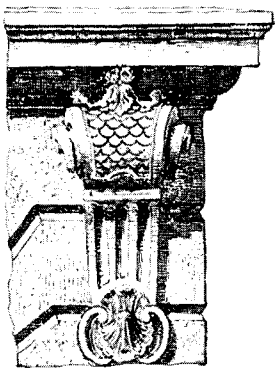
*Uniforms: Why We Are What We Wear*, by Paul Fussell (Houghton Mifflin, 192 pp., $22)

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

FOR a six-year-old Jewish boy growing up in Southern California in 1971, I had an unlikely obsession: to find and buy a miniature replica of a World War II German infantry uniform. It was to be an accessory for my G.I. Joe, the Hasbro "action figure," a.k.a. doll for boys. I'd seen it once somewhere—complete with helmet, boots, canteen, Luger, and oddly shaped German "stick" grenade—and spent one fruitless afternoon calling up every toy store in the Yellow Pages. Apparently, and no surprise given the dubiousness of selling Nazi paraphernalia to children, it had been discontinued.

What a difference three decades makes. When I looked up the item on eBay a moment ago, I found that it is readily available from a collector in St. Augustine, Fla., the current auction price having reached $8.99. Such is the fascination of uniforms—which happens to be the subject of Paul Fussell's new book—that I'm considering making a bid.

In Fussell's survey of the subject, the Germans get a chapter to themselves, so triumphant—let's be frank—was the Nazi drive to perfect the coolest military uniforms of the 20th century. As Fussell writes, in terms of style as well as soul—remembering that soul can be evil as well as good—the black of the SS, ornamented by the signature skull-and-crossbones, competes only with the splendidly colorful dress uniform of the U.S. Marines. Himmler himself designed the uniform, inspired by the example of the Jesuits, whom he admired.



Into this short, stylish, pungently written book, Fussell has packed about as much information as you could want, covering the military and the civilian spheres alike. Did you know that the traditional Roman collar of the Catholic clergy goes back only to the 19th century? That the headcovering worn by bishops and more exalted officials of the Church, an intriguing *yarmulke*-like skullcap, is called the *zucchetto*, and that its three colors designate successively higher ranks—violet, scarlet, and white, for bishops, cardinals, and the Pope?

Fussell is good at identifying the origins of some familiar uniforms. Today, "all over the world ground troops look alike, a considerable difficulty, one might think, in the conduct of ground warfare"—a military convention attributable to the American encounter in World War II with Nazi troops at Normandy. The Germans were attired in camouflage "leopard suits." Apparently no one had ever thought of composing uniforms in this way, but U.S. troops were impressed, the idea spread, and now such combat fatigues are standard for all armies, which hope their "infantrymen [will] look like leaves or some natural

**Mr. Klinghoffer's new book, *The Discovery of God: Abraham and the Birth of Monotheism*, will be published this month by Doubleday.**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flora and thus deceive the enemy."

An emeritus English professor at Penn, Fussell has his own personal uniform, which he shares with many other American men who wish to "stay out of sartorial trouble": the classic blue blazer and khaki pants. The design of the former arises from defunct British military considerations. The vent in the back of the jacket was originally intended not to accommodate an ample behind but to allow the wearer to sit elegantly on his horse. "It assumes that . . . being . . . an officer and gentleman, [he] will be mounted most of the time, and the vent keeps the jacket from bunching up when the officer is in the saddle."

But Fussell's originality comes in trying to explain what uniforms do for us. Yes, they keep armies visually distinct from one another—or they did, until the introduction of camouflage. Yes, they save trouble. It's easier to throw on your khakis and blazer than to have to think up a new outfit for yourself every morning. But Fussell alerts us to deeper reasons for the pull exercised by uniforms. When placed on the bodies of soldiers, they allow the soul of a nation to speak in a visual language. Thus he emphasizes the casual attire of U.S. soldiers of World War II, compared to that of their European counterparts. Something about the shapeless bagginess, the lack of pretense, expressed the American attitude that war isn't something to be relished or gloried in amid angry threats and violent words, but rather something to get done as well and as quickly as possible. It reminds you of the attitude of a surgeon, not so dissimilarly uniformed, who bears no hatred toward the cancerous growth but simply wants it *out* so that the patient can recover.

To illustrate, Fussell recalls a memorable scene from World War II: "The pictures of the Japanese surrender on the deck of the USS *Missouri* are some of the most significant of the whole war: the triumphant Allied officers in their informal, unpretentious khakis, pressing forward for a sight of the humiliated, overdressed Japanese officers and diplomats wearing standard hot uniforms and striped trousers, black tailcoats, and silk top hats."

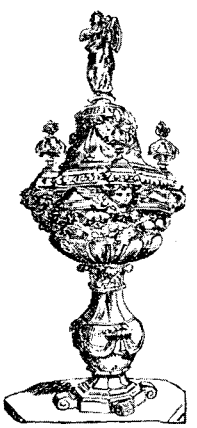
In civilian life, uniforms can serve a different function, no less profound. There seems to be a widespread human need to live inside a narrative: to feel you are part of a storyline that exceeds in importance and excitement that of someone who merely gets up in the morning to go to work or school, comes home at night, goes to sleep, and does it all over again the next day, and so on for decades until he finally collapses and dies. To create meaning in life, it's common for people to fantasize—not to give themselves over entirely to daydreams but to import dream elements into their daily existence. Men and women accomplish this in various ways—for example, by joining organizations or attending schools that conjure romantic images of a glorious past. They also do it by putting on certain clothing, which likewise conjures the wearer into a story, a narrative. Fussell alludes to this when he writes that "one of [a uniform's] functions is to let you assume a character not your own." This brings us to what may be the most valuable thing about civilian uniforms, at least in America, where it is not the more highly paid or honored members of society who end up so attired. It isn't Hollywood executives and corporate lawyers who wear formal uniforms, but rather our waitresses and doormen, Amtrak conductors and delivery personnel. Fussell writes:

**Putting on certain clothing conjures the wearer into a story, a narrative. Uniforms enlarge the person who wears them.**

> When I first began pursuing this subject, I assumed that many people wearing uniforms in low-paying work resented being the compulsory bearers of such visible evidence of their subordinate condition. But what did I find? All but universal pride in a uniform of any kind, comparable with that felt by an enlisted marine on graduation day. The uniform, no matter how lowly, assures its audience that the wearer *has* a job, one likely not to be merely temporary and one extorting a degree of respect for being associated with a successful enterprise.

Uniforms enlarge the person who wears them. For an emeritus professor at an Ivy League university, it takes a certain compassion to see things from the perspective of people so far down the social-status pole. The more typical professorial inclination would be to strip the working class of their uniforms, to "liberate" them from "oppression."

So it's a little paradoxical that a lack of compassion in other areas is the main problem with Paul Fussell as a social critic. The guy has a mean streak, a dyspeptic style that can be less amusing than he thinks. Take his treatment of war re-enactors, weekend enthusiasts who enjoy putting on uniforms reminiscent of the Revolutionary War, Civil War, even World War II, and pretending to engage one another in battle. Fussell has both experienced and written much about war, as in his best-known book, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, and rightly feels himself to be an expert. The re-enactors bother him a bit too much.



"Not having endured real military experience, they get excited by faking it"—these "weirdos," these "sickos." "You can order genuine Purple Heart and Bronze Star medals to assist your fantasized new identity . . . [But] they neglect certain details, like the writhing of the wounded, their attempts to thrust back into their abdomens their protruding intestines . . ."

Okay, we get the picture. This is sharp, highly evocative writing, needless to say, but is there really any harm in enjoying the fantasy of being a soldier, even if the content of the fantasy is worlds distant from the supremely grim reality? We all fantasize. We all daydream. If uniforms, real or fake, assist the fantasy, surely no harm is done. As for me, I'm contemplating making a bid of $10.99 on a 30-year-old G.I. Joe uniform. Will I take the prize? What do you think? **NR**



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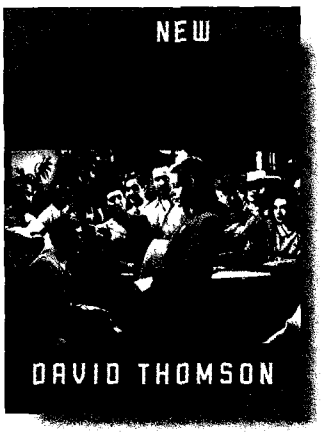
# A Cinema Classic, Updated




*The New Biographical Dictionary of Film*, 4th ed., by David Thomson (Knopf, 963 pp., $35)

TERRY TEACHOUT

DAVID THOMSON'S *New Biographical Dictionary of Film* is one of those unclassifiably quirky books, like *Pictures from an Institution* or *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, that are unknown to the public at large but treasured by a tiny band of loyalists. Every true-blue film buff I know owns a copy of Thomson (as the *Biographical Dictionary* is eponymously known to its devotees), consults it regularly, and gives it to friends for Christmas, whether they want it or not. So when I heard that Thomson had updated Thomson for the third time since 1975, taking due note of such worthy new arrivals as Steve Buscemi, Reese Witherspoon, and Renée Zellweger, I cleared a place on my writing calendar, having long wanted to say something in print about one of the most engrossing and exasperating books ever written about the movies. Thomson's fans are like that: always on the lookout for converts.

One reason so few people know about Thomson's magnum opus is that it flies the false flag of a reference book. The title is anodyne, the typography is staid, and the text consists of more than 1,300 alphabetically arranged entries, starting with Abbott and Costello and ending with Terry Zwigoff, each one prefaced by a chronological list of films. What could be less enticing? But don't let appearances fool you. H. L. Mencken once explained to Theodore Dreiser that the sober-sided title and appearance of the magazine in whose handsomely printed pages Mencken cavorted each month were mere camouflage to lull the unsuspecting booboisie: "What we need is something that looks highly respectable outwardly. *The American Mercury* is almost perfect for that purpose. What will go on inside the tent is another story. You will recall that the late P. T. Barnum got away with burlesque shows by calling them moral lectures." Thomson is similarly sneaky, cramming one outrageously idiosyncratic opinion after another into the 963 action-packed pages of *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film*.

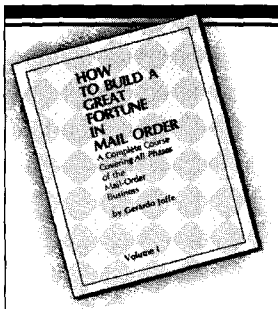
Here, for instance, is Thomson on John Ford: "Sheer longevity made Ford a major director. No one has done so much to invalidate the Western as a form."

On Billy Wilder: "He was a trimmer, who knew how to sweeten his own sour pills but who time and again slipped out of the ugly position of offering tough medicine."

On Bing Crosby: "It would be unjust to call him dull. More accurate to say that for forty years he skirted risk. His ease is that of the soft option."

You won't find that kind of elbow-jabbing in *Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia*—but, then, David Thomson is a different breed of cat: a critic triply endowed with passion, brains, and the gift of quotability. When he's wrong,

**Mr. Teachout, the film critic of Crisis, is the author of *The Skeptic: A Life of H. L. Mencken*, recently published by HarperCollins.**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he's wrong, but his batting average is quite startlingly high, and even when he's being silly (Angie Dickinson is his favorite actress) or perverse (his book contains no entry for Whit Stillman), you still wish you could write like that.

Though he isn't rigid about it, Thomson subscribes to the *auteur* theory of film criticism, which posits that directors are the "authors" of the movies they make, whether or not they wrote the scripts. Hence *The New Biographical Dictionary* is devoted primarily to directors and actors, with only a bare handful of writers, producers, and other lesser breeds making the final cut. This theory is silly and perverse in equal measure—some directors are *auteurs*, others glorified traffic cops—but it's what Thomson thinks, so there's no point in arguing with him. Besides, he is in every other way the least doctrinaire of critics, as appreciative of *His Girl Friday* as of *La Règle du Jeu* (and vice versa), and for all his enthusiasm, his praise is invariably precise and nuanced, as in this wonderfully exact appraisal of Humphrey Bogart:

> He made few wholly satisfactory films—*High Sierra*, *To Have and Have Not*, *The Big Sleep*, *In a Lonely Place*—and failed in a variety of parts outside the narrow range he saw fit for himself. But within that range he had the impact of Garbo or James Dean. Like them, he was a great Romantic. It is harder to see him as such because of the efforts he made to appear anti-Romantic. The implications of his work—as a comment on self-dramatization—are rather more daunting and disturbing than he ever realized.

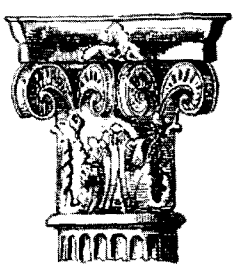
The acid test of Thomson's clear-sightedness is that he never lets his arch-liberal politics get in the way of his artistic perceptions (well, hardly ever—he overrates *American Beauty* and allows himself to wax wroth about Ronald Reagan). Look up John Wayne, Antichrist of the Hollywood Left, and you will find a thoughtful tribute to "a great screen actor" who "moved the way singers sing, with huge confidence and daring." Look up Carl Foreman, on the other hand, and you will find the anti-anti-Communist western *High Noon* coolly written off as "the product of pretension, commonplace mentality, and an inability to relate the Western genre to credible or intriguing people." Especially at the present moment, it is both a treat and a relief to read a book about film whose author likes what he likes because he likes it and not because he thinks he ought to.

Yet Thomson's deepest convictions about film are in one fundamental way political, for he believes—or believed—in the promise of film as an agent of cultural democracy, a mass medium that brings beauty to ordinary people. Now, in late middle age, he has come to wonder whether he spent the first part of his life worshiping a false god:

**Thomson believes in the promise of film as an agent of cultural democracy.**

> This was a book conceived and first written in the early 1970s, when it was easy to be in love with cinema. So many exciting things were going on. Time and again, as I wrote, I was lifted by the exhilaration of a new film seen the night before. That soaring is harder to manage now, so I am left wondering whether I am heavier, or less "passionate"—or are the movies less? Do we face a time when movies resemble theatre or the novel? Must we give up the hope of films that reach "everyone"? Can great filmmakers still redeem the hope? Or was it, simply, an historical curiosity that for a few decades (or a few movies) the hope was alive?

Thomson's frank nostalgia for the lost common culture of the middlebrow era explains one of the few consistently unhappy idiosyncrasies of his book. Not only is there no entry for Stillman—the *auteur* of *Metropolitan*, *Barcelona*, and *The Last Days of Disco*—but I was equally surprised to find that such other noteworthy young writer-directors as Brad Anderson (*Next Stop Wonderland*), Darren Aronofsky (*Pi*), Noah Baumbach (*Kicking & Screaming*), Tom DiCillo (*Living in Oblivion*), and Kevin Smith (*Chasing Amy*) are also missing in action. By this time, I was starting to get the idea, so I looked up Parker Posey, the queen of the indie flicks, and sure enough, she wasn't there, either.



Why, I wondered, had Thomson chosen to ignore so many of the independent filmmakers whose witty small-scale productions are by far the brightest things that American film has had to offer in the post-*Titanic* era of big-budget bloat? Was it possible that he simply didn't know about them? Then, by chance, I turned to page 376 and found an entry for Hal Hartley (*Henry Fool*) in which all was made manifest:

> What interests me especially here is the plight of the classic independent filmmaker, the distinct yet pale voice that has never really dreamed of going Hollywood and seeks only the kind of art-house audience that has never been as uncertain of itself in America as now. Yes, of course there should be a place for such a thing—for Hartley, John Sayles, and Whit Stillman (and many others). Yet still the feeling lurks: that the movie in America has some duty to be large, embracing (and uniting)—that it requires some kind of sensational reach or vulgarity that wants everyone. That it is un-American to resist that.

John Sayles and Whit Stillman "distinct yet pale"? How utterly wrongheaded. But how touching, too, that Thomson, who came of critical age in the decade that gave us such genuinely artful box-office smashes as *Chinatown*, *Taxi Driver*, and *The Godfather*, should cling a quarter-century later to the weirdly idealistic notion that movies might yet redeem the world, going so far as to suggest that M. Night Shyamalan's *The Sixth Sense* "remains one of those pictures that gives one hope for Hollywood." Sure, *The Sixth Sense* was a terrific movie, but why drag Hollywood into it? That's like saying the Chicken Whopper gives one hope for fast food.

Not that it matters in the least. The point of this book is not that it is right about everything, or even most things (though I happen to think that it is), but that its hopelessly film-drunk author is always interesting. David Thomson is, in short, a born critic, and if you love movies half as much as he does, you will find *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film* an endless source of controversy and delight. **NR**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■ CITY DESK ■

# Sick in the City

RICHARD BROOKHISER

BEING sick in New York is, in most ways, like being sick anywhere else. The influenza pandemic of 1918–1919 killed 12,000 New Yorkers, and 15 to 20 million victims worldwide; according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (12th edition) only St. Helena, Mauritius, and Australia were spared. Death played as well on the road as it did here.

Milder forms of flu, and the colds that mimic them, have taken the place of the scourge. The flu season begins in the late fall with the arrival of that year's vaccine, not long before the first bottles of Beaujolais Nouveau. We present our delts to our doctors for a friendly jab, and hope for the best. The annoying ailments of winter are caused by germs and viruses, yet, still hearing the voices of our cautious long-gone mothers, we attribute malign power to extraneous circumstances: the step in the puddle, the snow on the neck, staying up an hour too late. When we feel the premonitory signs—the tickle at the back of the soft palate, the sneeze that repeats itself—we reach for the arsenal of palliatives, that shades from science to folk wisdom: zinc; echinacea; tea with honey and lemon juice. Sometimes, like U.N. peacekeepers, we temporarily hold the threat at bay.

But, once a season, the defenses fail, and all the familiar symptoms take possession. Lazy tourists, they move slowly and at random from one body part to the next. They are afflicting in themselves, and taunting by reminding us of what they are not. Muscles ache, without the endorphin rush of a workout or the borrowed virility of sweating beside real hunks. Nose and eyes water without the burn of shrimp vindaloo. Throats tingle without the joy of singing or gossip; lungs heave without the release of sobs. We lie awake and have no inspiration; we take naps and have no rest.

We are out of ourselves. We become figures in a diorama, computer-generated orcs. The parts are in place; we emit sound; but the effect is wooden, lifeless. Our senses desert us, or go on slow-down strike. Taste and smell—missing, unaccounted for. Hearing and sight—still there, but hard to manage. We read the same page of the *New York Times* over and over before we feel done with it, and we read every page, including the weather map and reports on European corporations. Only touch is reliable, and it mostly serves to tell us that our ankles feel a cold draft or that we drooled on the pillow. Our thoughts desert us as well. The daydreams of triumph and eros that comfort idleness lose their allure—unless we are unlucky enough to have a fever, when they become lurid caricatures of themselves. *She turned up her face toward me and . . .* So what? (Or:) She was a ferret.

**Here the walking wounded can find the solace of fellow beings.**

These are the universal qualities of dis-ease. What New York brings to the table is the proximity of fellow New Yorkers. When you live 13 stories above an avenue that is a truck route, and above, between, and below other New Yorkers, you are aware of the presence of others. Mostly, this is a blessing. The quiet of the countryside would be too much like a hospital. The long roar of traffic is neither melancholy nor withdrawing; it is the sea of faith of daily life; it is good to be near it. The same is true of the occasional barking dog, or child. Only, please, no music: When Chet Baker's satin-casket-liner voice, singing "My Funny Valentine," welled up through the wall by my head, that attempt to doze was over.

The economics of proximity restricts our own living spaces. Living so close to one another, no one can live large, and cabin fever becomes more feverish in the shrunken cabins of Manhattan. Here the restless sick person cannot wander to the TV room, the sun porch, or the basement. There is, in fact, a basement in my apartment building, but all I would find there is coin-operated washing machines and the janitor. I look out one window, then the next. From the first I see snowflakes, wet and rapid, about to become rain drops, or fat and hesitant, too light to make their way through a mild updraft, as if saying to each other, "Call the cloud—what do we do next?" From the second window, I see the same flakes. I could take the plunge into television or the Internet, but that would be like zoo animals playing with a wretched toy, or prisoners papering their cells with *Penthouse* Pets.

But New York offers an escape. You can go out—and even if you can only manage to go a little way, there is still someplace to go. The density that imprisons you also supplies you with easy destinations. Consider the sufferers who live in gated communities. If they step outside their front doors, what do they find? The lawn? The driveway? An ornamental planting of pampas grass? It's pretty in the summer, and may even be worth the mortgage, but it doesn't talk.

Here the walking wounded can find the solace of fellow beings. You can accomplish simple errands, taking the shirt that needs mending to the Korean tailor who has a reproduction of Millet's *Angelus* on his wall. You can watch the timeless courtship of snowball fights; the girls never get away, even if they have a good start; could they want to be caught? You can sit in neighborhood coffeehouses and restaurants and eat and drink things that you could make more cheaply and better at home, except that at home you would not overhear the conversation of your own kind: the solemn and idiotic-sounding business plan; or the discussion, between a sweet-faced girl and an overweight, ear-ringed boy, of *The Two Towers*: "So, are elves immortal?" If what they say interests you, then you must be like them. Maybe you are alive after all. The city supplies its own remedy. **NR**



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■ SHELF LIFE ■

# The Gioia Creation

MICHAEL POTEMRA

DANA GIOIA, one of America's most distinguished poets, was recently confirmed by the Senate as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts—which is great news for the arts. To understand why, read his splendid collection of literary criticism, *Can Poetry Matter?: Essays on Poetry and American Culture*, now available in a tenth-anniversary edition (Graywolf, 231 pp., $16).

The book shows Gioia as the rarest of birds: the poet/essayist as figure of broad cultural consequence. When the essay "Can Poetry Matter?" was first published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1991, it touched off a salutary national debate; and it remains provocative. Gioia is devoted to the possibility of high culture without sterile hermeticism, and is uncompromising in his depiction of how far short of this standard poetry has in fact fallen: "Today poetry is a modestly upwardly mobile, middle-class profession—not as lucrative as waste management or dermatology but several big steps above the squalor of bohemia. . . . However healthy poetry may appear within its professional subculture, it has lost this larger audience [of intellectually curious readers], who represent poetry's bridge to the general culture."

He is unsparing of individual poets—for example, calling Robert Bly "simplistic, monotonous, insensitive to sound, enslaved by literary diction, and pompously sentimental," and saying of James Dickey that "it takes a certain genius to write this badly." But he also writes: "Society has already told us that poetry is dead. Let's build a funeral pyre out of the desiccated conventions piled around us and watch the ancient, spangle-feathered, unkillable phoenix rise from the ashes." *That's* the kind of fresh sensibility the NEA desperately needs; for other examples, please consult Gioia's book, passim.

■ Aficionados of military history can rejoice: The stenographic record of Adolf Hitler's conferences with his generals is finally being published in English. *Hitler and His Generals: Military Conferences 1942–1945* (Enigma, 1,158 pp., $42), edited by Helmut Heiber and David M. Glantz, provides the complete text of the surviving transcripts, along with over 350 pages of detailed notes. This massive book will, of course, be of interest chiefly to aficionados of such detail; but it also offers, even to non-specialist readers, an occasional chilling glimpse of the fundamentally evil character of the regime and its leader. In one such instance, Hitler is discussing rules for fighting against guerrillas:

> What should [the police] do, if the pigs push women and children out in front? I went through that in Chemnitz, where the red pigs spit on us while holding their children in front of them. We were completely defenseless. God forbid, if we had touched those children! Fighting against [guerrillas] is the same situation. If they push women and children out in front of them, then the officer or non-commissioned officer has to have the option of shooting them, regardless. . . . The person carrying the gun has to be guaranteed complete cover from the rear. We can give him general orders, but we have to cover his back as well, so the poor devil doesn't have to say to himself, "Afterwards, I will be held responsible."

But here Hitler was in the position of King Canute, for—in the end—responsibility cannot be abolished by human fiat. Even the most powerful regime is not eternal, and there will, sooner or later, be a final accounting for all actions undertaken in the name of "self-defense." Equally false was Hitler's analysis of how national wealth necessarily breeds complacency: "In my opinion, all people who have assets of more than 250,000 marks generally become cowards, because they want to live off of their money and sit on their 250,000 marks. They lose all courage. If someone has 1 or 2 million, you can be reassured—those people won't start a revolution or anything else. That is why they oppose all wars, even if their compatriots are starving—they couldn't care less."

What Hitler simply could not conceive of was a nation that would fight and win wars simply out of a belief in justice. Unfortunately for him, he would soon encounter the might of precisely such a nation. **NR**

GUIDE TO THE OTHER GALLERY

This is the hall of broken limbs
Where splintered marble athletes lie
Beside the arms of cherubim.
Nothing is ever thrown away.

These butterflies are set in rows.
So small and gray inside their case
They look alike now. I suppose
Death makes most creatures commonplace.

These portraits here of the unknown
Are hung three high, frame piled on frame.
Each potent soul who craved renown,
Immortalized without a name.

Here are the shelves of unread books,
Millions of pages turning brown.
Visitors wander through the stacks,
But no one ever takes one down.

I wish I were a better guide.
There's so much more that you should see.
Rows of bottles with nothing inside.
Displays of locks which have no key.

You'd like to go? I wish you could.
This room has such a peaceful view.
Look at that case of antique wood
Without a label. It's for you.

—DANA GIOIA


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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

## A Hard Day's Viewing

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 4

THE History Channel on television had an hour on the First World War. It focused on the attempt by the British to build parallel tunnels that would permit explosives to be detonated inside the German lines in eastern France. The megaton explosives would all go off at the same moment, the British would charge forward, and then make their way to the Belgian port of Ostend to estop the German submarines that were choking Britain to death. The tunnel project took two years. And when time came to move the troops and artillery pieces forward, the rains began, soldiers dropped into the mud and drowned, and not even 100 men could haul artillery pieces out of the mud ruts in which they were stuck. The British had an army of 249,000 when the war started, and now 5 million were mobilized. The Americans arrived in 1917 with 750,000 troops. Casualties in a single day's fighting reached as many as 50,000. Ten million died by the war's end.

*Sixty Minutes*, one hour later, featured a German doctor who had come home from spending 14 months in North Korea. He told Mike Wallace that he was devoting his time to trying to give an apathetic public *some idea* of what life is like in that country. Starvation happens before your very eyes. Hospitals use milk bottles to store such medicines as there are.—Can't they get out some idea of how miserably they live? Mike Wallace asked.—No. No they can't. There is *zero* communication with the outside world. Radios are soldered in to the Pyongyang channel. There is a single sign of life: 1 million preening soldiers. That's the equivalent of 30 million Americans in uniform.

And then television gave a reprise of the awful minutes ending the lives of seven human beings, 39 miles from earth, up in the skies, traveling at 12,500 miles per hour. The brief eulogy by President Bush was replayed. He told us that the victims had a "high and noble purpose" in life, that "mankind is led into the darkness beyond our world" by a "longing to understand." He closed with the ultimately understanding words of the prophet Isaiah, who said that God knew the names of every one of the stars He created, so also of the crew of the shuttle *Columbia*.

So also of the dead in World War I trenches? And the living dead in North Korea? And the impending dead in Iraq?

The hour on television displayed the screeching need both for an understanding, and for a longing to understand, how the star-maker countenances what we do in war and peace on the earth on which we were given free rein. And what we fail to do. We will make an effort in the Mideast, but none is in prospect in the north Pacific, two areas of the world which the seven astronauts overflew 100 times, serene that they were out of harm's way, a dream they died dreaming.

## McCain Levels With NATO

BRUSSELS, FEBRUARY 11

THE talk at NATO headquarters, a great sprawl in the outskirts of Brussels, the center of which was once a Belgian hospital, is of the impasse over Turkey. Not exactly an impasse: The United States and its allies will eventually have their way, tendering effective protection to Turkey against Iraqi Scud missiles. But the diplomatic fissure is great, exacerbated by parliamentary moves and countermoves.

What matters substantively is that France and Germany (and Belgium) elected on Monday to reaffirm their month-long opposition to pre-emptive, pre-war help to Turkey. What drew attention was the novel invocation by Turkey of Article IV of the NATO treaty. It is not surprising that no one knew what it says, even as no one remembers what Article IV of the U.S. Constitution says. The mind skips over to NATO Article V, which is the pledge of NATO nations to help one another when attacked. Turkey, which has promised bases to the United States when and if needed in the proceedings against Iraq, had been turned down by NATO in its request for anti-missile missiles, and now invoked Article IV, which calls for "consultations" among NATO allies against a potential threat.

What happened at NATO was a refusal, engineered by France and Germany, immediately to grant the implicit fraternal succor of consultation against potential aggression. The French argued that this would presuppose an act of aggression by Iraq, and to do so would be to compromise ongoing U.N. inspection procedures. And indeed, Iraq has decreed that any arming of Turkey designed to augment the U.S. effort in the area would be deemed an act of war.

Two days before, Secretary Rumsfeld and Sen. John McCain were among the speakers at the Munich Conference on European Security Policy. Mr. Rumsfeld reiterated the reasons given by Messrs. Bush and Powell for proceeding against Iraq. There were no surprises in the Rumsfeld speech, though it was vigorous and persuasive, exhibiting his skills as a confident and resourceful leader. He called shrewd attention to the progressive isolation of the NATO dissenters, up against the growing coalition of world leaders joined in the adamant stand we have taken on Iraq.

What was very special was the



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speech by Sen. McCain. Mr. McCain has a large constituency, and many took it for granted that his appeal would be to liberal ambiguists. The toughness of his language to describe European dissenters was especially arresting for those liberals who have thought that Sen. McCain would be ambivalent on the Iraq question. Hardly. He sounded like General Curtis LeMay (forgotten, like Article IV) sounding the tocsin for relentless military action. It is right, he said, to abide by the mandate of international institutions when these act, as the United Nations did in Resolution 1441, to defend the cause of security. Otherwise, there is chaos, as nations struggle without the assurance of collective action. "The United States might succeed [to survive] in such an environment, though I hate to contemplate it, but many nations, including many in Europe, will not."

There was still hope, when McCain spoke those words, that France and Germany would back away, on the Turkish question, before the Monday deadline. They didn't. "If this minority of French-German obstruction is not overcome . . . France and Germany will have to answer to those who argue that Iraq could be to NATO what Abyssinia was to the League of Nations."

There is of course time to make things right, though no substantial contribution by France to the Iraqi military enterprise is expected, and Germany has forsworn any contribution. What McCain thinks of as permanently damaged is the effectiveness of the NATO alliance, devotedly pursued in Brussels, athwart the political opportunism not only of France and Germany, but also Belgium—the country that shelters not only NATO, but the headquarters of the European Union, which shares suburban acreage outside the city of Brussels: two headquarters, symbols for so long of security and hope in a Europe scarred by failures to heed sound counsel over the first 50 years of the bloody century gone by, and bedeviled by internecine faction, now grown to a major NATO crisis.

# The Spoils of Glory

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 14

THE whole world, it seems, hangs on the future within NATO of the current dispute. The sense of it, in parts of Europe, is that Germany accidentally tripped into its present position. For one, there was—there is—the brooding matter of its military-imperialist past, and the sense that binds it, as it does Japan, in those postwar loincloths of innocence that make *Machtpolitik* something of an impiety, let alone a question of tanks and missiles and bayonets. There came then the accidental success of marginal candidate Gerhard Schroeder, who brushed the anti-American cream off the top of the electoral vat and scored an upset victory. He and Germany are stuck with it, and will come around on the matter of help to Turkey only if a formula sufficiently emasculating is contrived.

The plight of France is brilliantly examined by the Strategic Forecasting Intelligence unit (www.stratfor.com) of Texas. The analyst reminds us of the basic problem of modern France, which is that it isn't strong enough to figure dominantly on the international scene by the mere deployment of its geopolitical or commercial resources. This requires a very heavy load on its cultural resources. These are formidable, but how many *opéras comiques* are needed to float out the single French aircraft carrier? The *Charles de Gaulle* has scarcely left harbor during its accident-prone existence. The British sage Paul Johnson, summarizing France's straitened military, writes that "there is no chance of the French cutting a *bella figura* in any hostilities, and so the easy way out for her is to oppose them."

The aircraft carrier's eponym intuited the problem in 1966, when, as president of France, he dramatically pulled the French out of the NATO administration. He did not pull out of NATO—France is still a member of that alliance—but the authority to deploy the French military remains that of France alone. It is because of that rupture that the NATO administration was relocated to Brussels, where it sits cheek by jowl with the European Union. If every one of the NATO powers were to abide by de Gaulle's maxims—never divest yourself of your own power, but engage in ad hoc alignments to magnify that power—a stable alliance would be impossible. And the challenge of Iraq is illustrating an instability we'd have done better to anticipate more skillfully. What we have now, of course, is the challenge of taming the Iraqi beast, and the need to absorb a NATO alliance with room given for the caprice of the two major nations of—old Europe.

The parliamentarians are getting great exercise in the libertine theater. There is the sense of independence not only from the power of the superpower, but from the restraints that attach to ordered rhetoric. Belgium wants, no less, to try General Sharon, after he leaves office, as a *war criminal*. That is the kind of thing against which cool heads warned when General Pinochet suddenly found himself a prisoner in London. Donald Rumsfeld let it fly against Germany that in behaving as it lately has, it is in the same league as Cuba and Libya.

"In recent months," writes Paul Johnson in NATIONAL REVIEW, the anti-American pitch "has surpassed itself in its fury at the notion of 'Texas adolescents' wielding more power than 'European sophisticates.' Mixed in this bouillabaisse of rage are anti-Semitism, a distrust of popular democracy, frustrated socialism, and a smug use of French cultural superiority." What to do? "When the French elites are in such a mood they are beyond the reach of argument and are best ignored."

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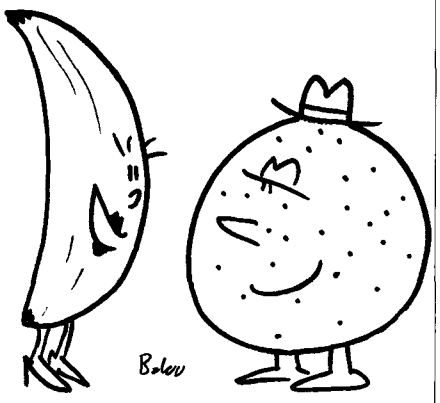

*"Really?—The Agent Orange?"*



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# what's right

DAVID FRUM

## Our Man for Iraq

THERE'S an old joke about the Air Force major assigned to brief a superior officer about the latest Cold War contingency plan. He finishes triumphantly: "And that is how we intend to destroy the enemy!"

The superior shakes his head wearily. "Young man, the Soviets are our adversary. The Navy is the enemy."

If you've done much newspaper reading in recent weeks, you have probably noticed all those stories—some datelined Washington, some datelined northern Iraq—about the latest flare-up between the U.S. government and the main Iraqi opposition group, the Iraqi National Congress. It's enough to make you wonder whether some people in the U.S. government don't see Saddam as merely the adversary—and the INC as the real enemy.

The INC is an assembly of many different groups united by their determination to overthrow Saddam and build a more liberal Iraq. It is made up of Kurds as well as Arabs, socialists and free-marketeers, Christians and Muslims, Sunnis and Shi'ites, secular intellectuals and tribal traditionalists. The INC is led by Ahmed Chalabi, a descendant of one of Iraq's most prominent families; an American-educated businessman who is as democratic, market-oriented, and pro-Western as any leader the Arab world has produced in half a century. Even Chalabi's many Iraqi critics acknowledge his moderation and tolerance. "I know this about Ahmed," one of them once said to me: "If I disagree with him, he won't murder me. By Iraqi standards, that's very impressive."

Over the years, Chalabi's democratic vision for Iraq has won the support of Americans across the political spectrum. He's admired by Iraq hawks like Richard Perle, Joe Lieberman, and John McCain—and also by Iraq doves like Joe Biden. He has been joined by Iraq's most famous writer, the democratic exile Kanan Makiya. In 1998, Congress appropriated nearly $100 million in aid for the INC.

Most of that money, however, has never been paid. For if Congress supports the INC, large elements of the U.S. foreign-policy bureaucracy hate it with a hatred hotter than any emotion they evince toward Saddam Hussein.

In the 1990s, the INC's CIA handlers forbade the group to conduct operations on Iraqi soil. Since 9/11, the State Department has shunned the INC in favor of its own creation, the Iraqi National Accord, a collection of former generals and other associates of Saddam.

A poisonous stream of not-for-attribution quotes about the INC has flowed from State and CIA into any newspaper willing to print them. Chalabi, it's said, is corrupt, ineffective, and an Iranian spy. "He could fight you for the last petit four on the tray over tea at the Savoy," one bitter former official told *The New Yorker* last April, "but that's about it."

Who's right? What's going on?

As always in Washington, there is a back-story—and then a story back of the back-story.

The back-story is this: In the 1990s, the Clinton administration organized a series of covert operations against Saddam's government. They all failed dismally, and many of the Iraqis who took part in them died gruesome deaths. The organizers of these operations felt shame, guilt—and a desperate desire to fix the blame for repeated disaster on somebody else.

The INC was an especially attractive target for the blame-shifters because Chalabi had repeatedly warned that the covert operations would fail—and in Washington, there are few sins quite so unforgivable as being right when everyone else is wrong. Actually, there is one worse sin: advocating bold action when everyone around you has shamefacedly decided that they would prefer to do nothing.

Chalabi kept arguing that the way to defeat Saddam was not with a plot, but with INC ground forces backed by U.S. airpower: the same tactic that would triumph in Afghanistan in 2001. The Clinton NSC team loathed this idea, and they fiercely resented Chalabi for pushing it.

The grudge endured into the Bush administration because, for reasons that remain very hard to understand, the Bush team kept much of the old Clinton national-security apparatus on the job for many months—in some cases more than a year—after Inauguration Day. And nowhere did change come more slowly than in those parts of the NSC that deal with the Middle East. Long after Clinton had left Washington to give speeches about how he came *this close* to making up his mind to wage war against Saddam Hussein, the people he hired were still at their desks waging war against Ahmed Chalabi.

That's the back-story. Now the back-back-story. Since the population of Iraq is nearly two-thirds Shi'ite Muslim, a more representative political system will probably bring to power a government drawn from the Shi'ite majority. Chalabi himself comes from a prominent Shi'ite family. And this prospect is very frightening to the Sunni Arabs of the Persian Gulf—and their many and influential friends and protectors in the West.

Even without the religious element, the idea of representative government being established anywhere in the Arab world dismays and appalls other Arab governments. That's understandable enough: The Arab world is a fractious and fragile place, super-saturated in extremism—it's easy to conjure up nightmare scenarios about what could happen if the people of the Arab world were ever allowed to express themselves freely.

On the other hand, it's hard to imagine America intervening in Iraq *without* at least attempting to leave behind some better system of government. Americans cannot make Iraq a liberal democracy. But only Americans can give Iraq a chance at liberal democracy. It is vital that Americans choose wisely—and it is necessary that America choose soon. If we wait to choose until the shooting stops, we may find that power in Iraq has already fallen into the hands of the very last people we should trust: those members of Saddam's entourage who switched sides at the opportune moment. **NR**


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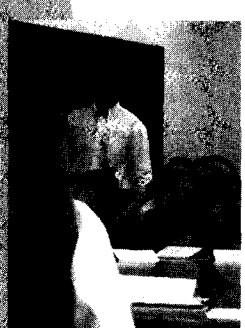

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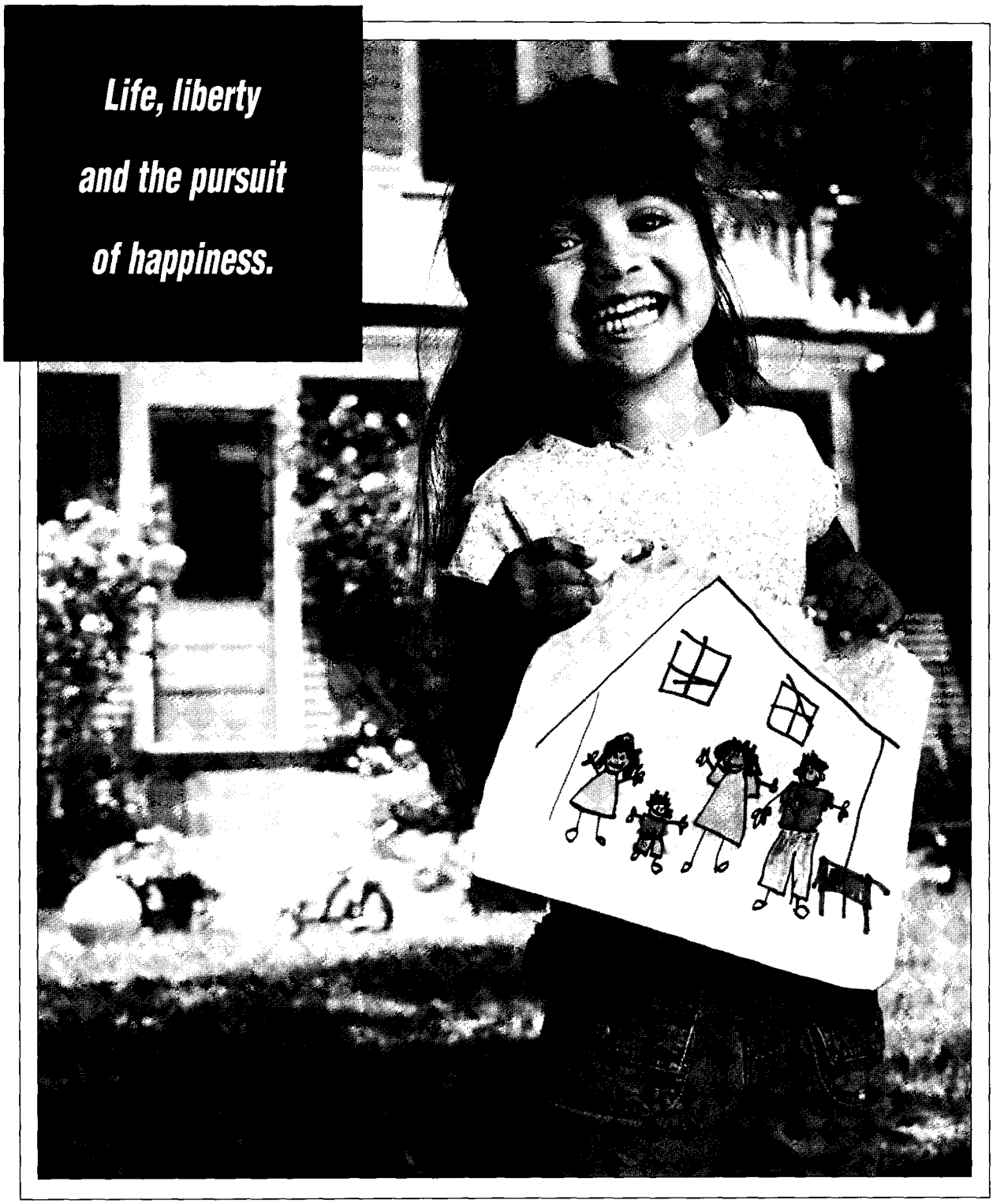


*They're the first generation of Castillas to own their own home. They learned about the home buying process and their financing options from a website developed by Freddie Mac. The same company that bought their mortgage from their bank. At Freddie Mac, we work with community groups all over the country to help educate first-time homebuyers. Because families like the Castillas just need a place to start. Homebuyer education could well help 10 million families buy their first homes by the end of this decade. And help us create a nation of homeowners. For details, visit freddiemac.com/homebuyers.*

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